



Part A: Daylesford, Hepburn Springs, Clunes, Creswick, Trentham & Glenlyon

Assessments of Existing Neighbourhood Character and Urban Design Framework

Prepared by **Hansen Partnership**
for **Hepburn Shire Council**

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Introduction, Project Aims, and Methodology

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.

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Introduction

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1.1 Introduction

This project has been undertaken by Hansen Partnership for the Hepburn Shire Council to provide for the townships of Clunes, Creswick, Trentham, Daylesford, Hepburn Springs and the settlement of Glenlyon (Townships) the following:

- Existing Neighbourhood Character Assessments (NCA) which document and determine the existing attributes of residential areas; and
- Urban Design Frameworks (UDF) to identify a vision and directions for the Town Centres (commercial areas) and their surrounds.

Part A: Daylesford, Hepburn Springs, Clunes, Creswick, Trentham & Glenlyon (this report) provides the introduction, project aims and methodology used for the Existing NCA and UDF. A standalone Existing NCA and UDF has been prepared for each of the Townships in Part B. Part A should ultimately be read in conjunction with the associated, standalone reports in Part B.

Part B for each township comprises the following standalone documents:

Daylesford Existing Neighbourhood Character Study & Urban Design Framework

Hepburn Springs Existing Neighbourhood Character Study & Urban Design Framework

Creswick Existing Neighbourhood Character Study & Urban Design Framework

Clunes Existing Neighbourhood Character Study & Urban Design Framework

Trentham Existing Neighbourhood Character Study & Urban Design Framework

Glenlyon Existing Neighbourhood Character Study & Urban Design Framework

The findings and recommendations of the NCA and UDF will inform Council's Structure Planning process.

1.2 Project Aims

The key aims of the **Existing Neighbourhood Character Assessment** are to:

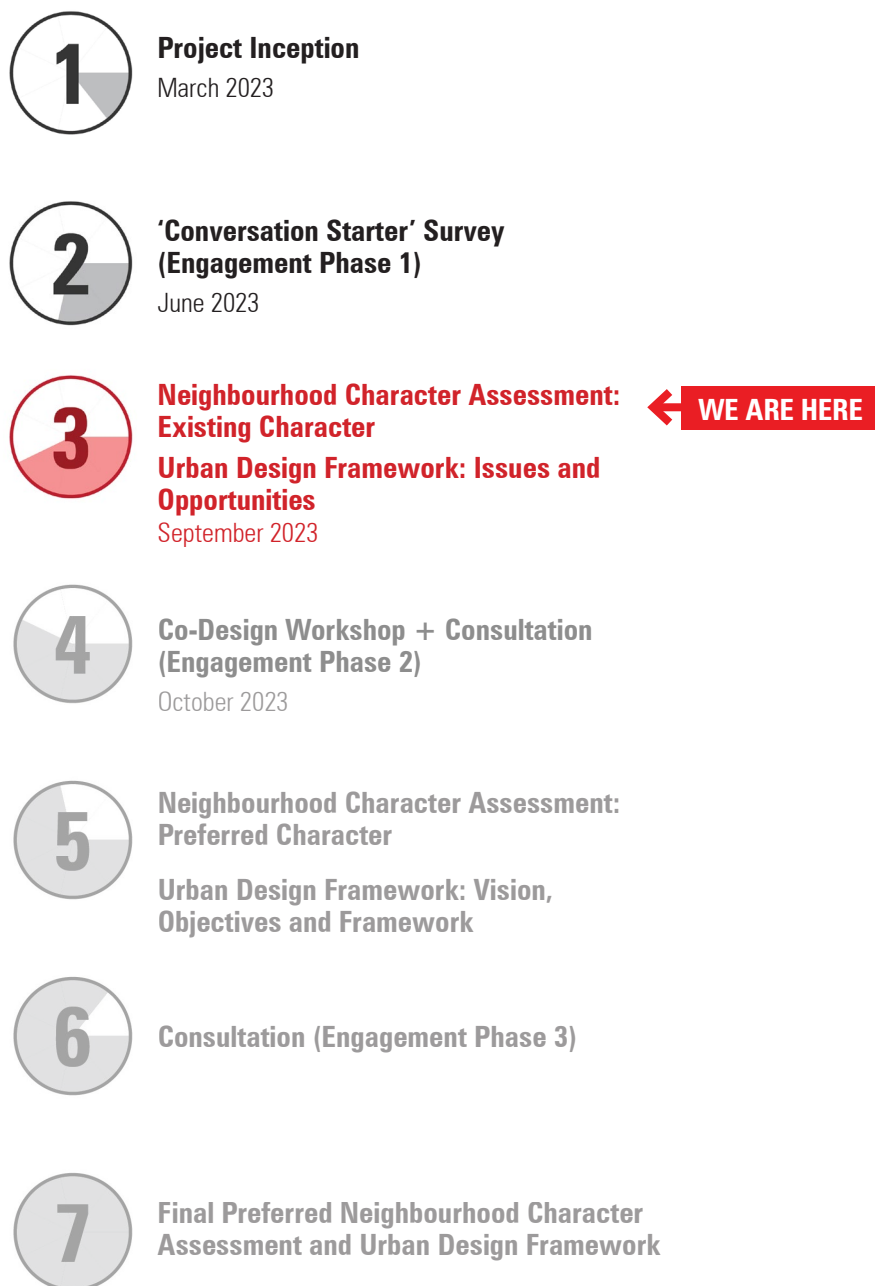
- Identify and define the existing neighbourhood character of residential areas, including what qualities should be considered for inclusion in the preferred character statement for each character area.
- Identify any areas where the existing character qualities should be protected or maintained.
- Identify the valued qualities of residential areas in Hepburn Shire.

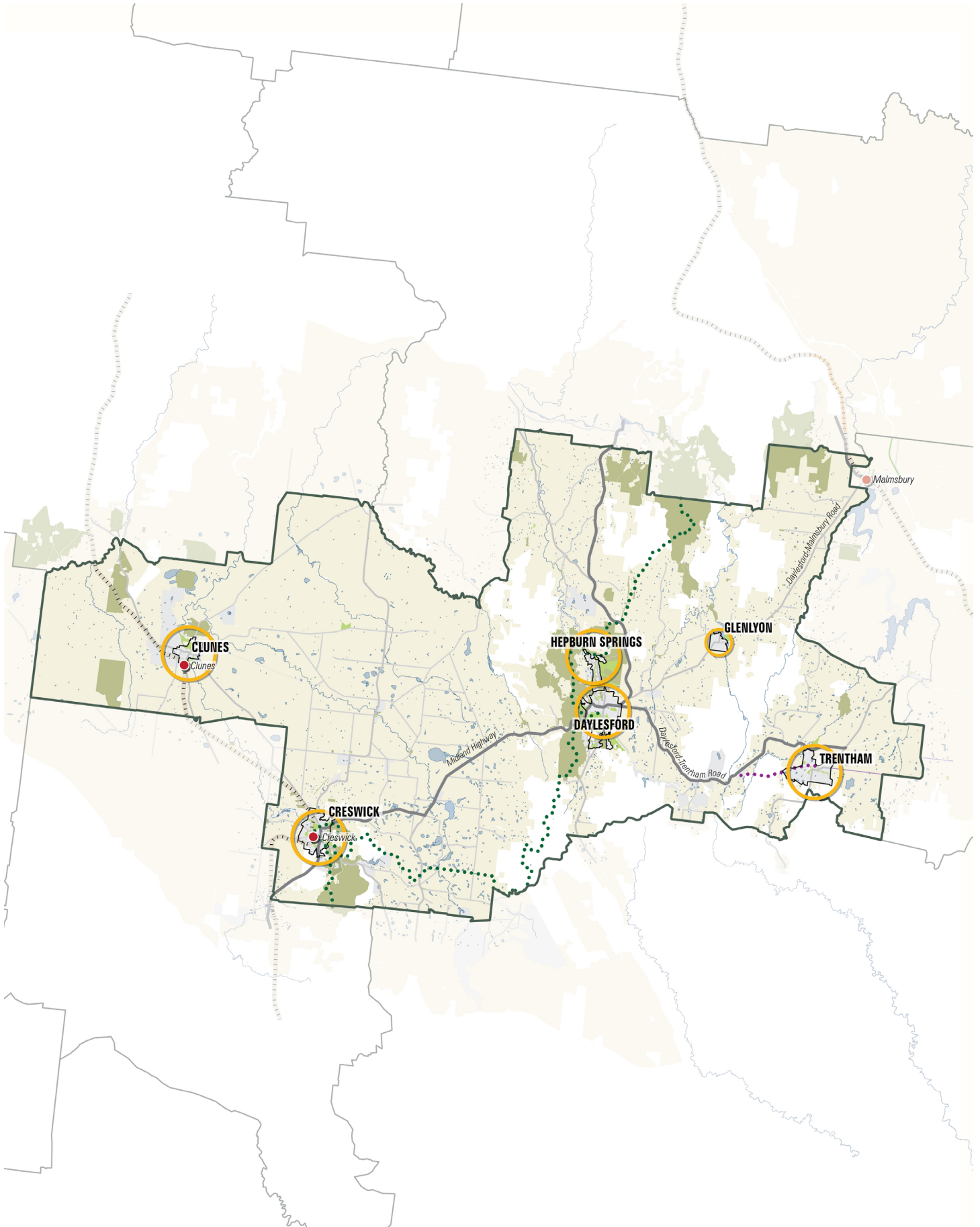
The key aims of the **Urban Design Framework** are to:

- Manage change and guide future development of the commercial areas and surrounds.
- Identify public realm upgrades and development outcomes in accordance with Council and community ambitions.
- Identify policy changes within the Hepburn Shire Planning Scheme.

1.3 Stages

The project will be undertaken over a 7 stage process as outlined in the diagram below. Part A and Part B (associated standalone reports) represents the work undertaken for the current stage (Stage 3). Future stages will include community engagement, preferred character assessments and urban design framework (vision, objectives and framework).





Legend

Hepburn Municipal Boundary	Township	Rural Land	Waterways
Municipal Boundary	Glenlyon	Major Road	Goldfields Track
Township Extent	State/National Parks & Conservation Reserves	Minor Road	Domino Track
Urban Land	Local parks & Open Space	Regional Railway	



Existing Neighbourhood Character

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2.1 What is Neighbourhood Character?

Residential or neighbourhood character is a term used in the Victorian Planning Scheme to describe the overall characteristics of an area. It relates to the combination of features that make one residential area different to another, including built form and landscape across public and private realms.

Planning Practice Note 43 (January 2018) defines Neighbourhood Character as follows:

“Neighbourhood character is essentially the combination of the public and private realms. Every property, public place or piece of infrastructure makes a contribution, whether great or small. It is the cumulative impact of all these contributions that establishes neighbourhood character.

The key to understanding character is being able to describe how the features of an area come together to give that area its own particular character. Breaking up character into discrete features and characteristics misses out on the relationships between these features and characteristics.

Understanding how these relationships physically appear on the ground is usually the most important aspect in establishing the character of the area.”

Neighbourhood Character therefore is comprised of features which occur within both the public realm or streetscape and within the private realm or on private land. Features which occur within the public realm are under the control or influence of Council and primarily relate to the street design and provision of street trees. Features which occur within the private realm are subject to the provision of the Planning Scheme and primarily relate to siting, access arrangement, scale, height, roof form and architectural features and garden setting of a dwelling.

Typically, the features of a residential area which contribute towards neighbourhood character are as follows:

Public Realm:

- Sub-division pattern;
- Lot size;
- Topography;
- Streetscape design;
- Street trees;
- Views and vistas;
- Car parking.

Private Realm:

- Siting;
- Building height;
- Building type;
- Architectural style/era of development;
- Materials;
- Roof form;
- Car access and storage;
- Vegetation; and
- Front boundary treatment

Respecting neighbourhood character is a fundamental objective of the residential development provisions in the Hepburn Planning Scheme.

Planning policies and controls contained in the Planning Scheme make a distinction between the existing character of an area and the preferred character:

- This Report: The existing character is what an area is like at present (reflects current characteristics in the public and private realm listed above).
- Next steps: The preferred character is what an area is planned to be like in the future.

This report, and the associated standalone reports seek to determine the existing neighbourhood character for the established residential areas of the Townships.

Preferred Character

In the next stage, the preferred character will determine the valued features and characteristics of an area to be respected by new development. Descriptions of existing characteristics are an important part of the process of identifying the ‘starting point’, but the preferred character needs to be ‘forward-looking’ and assessed in the context of other competing priorities. This includes features and characteristics of an area, the housing outcomes sought and community views. In some cases, it might be appropriate to develop a new character, while there may be areas where protecting critical elements should be reflected into all new developments.

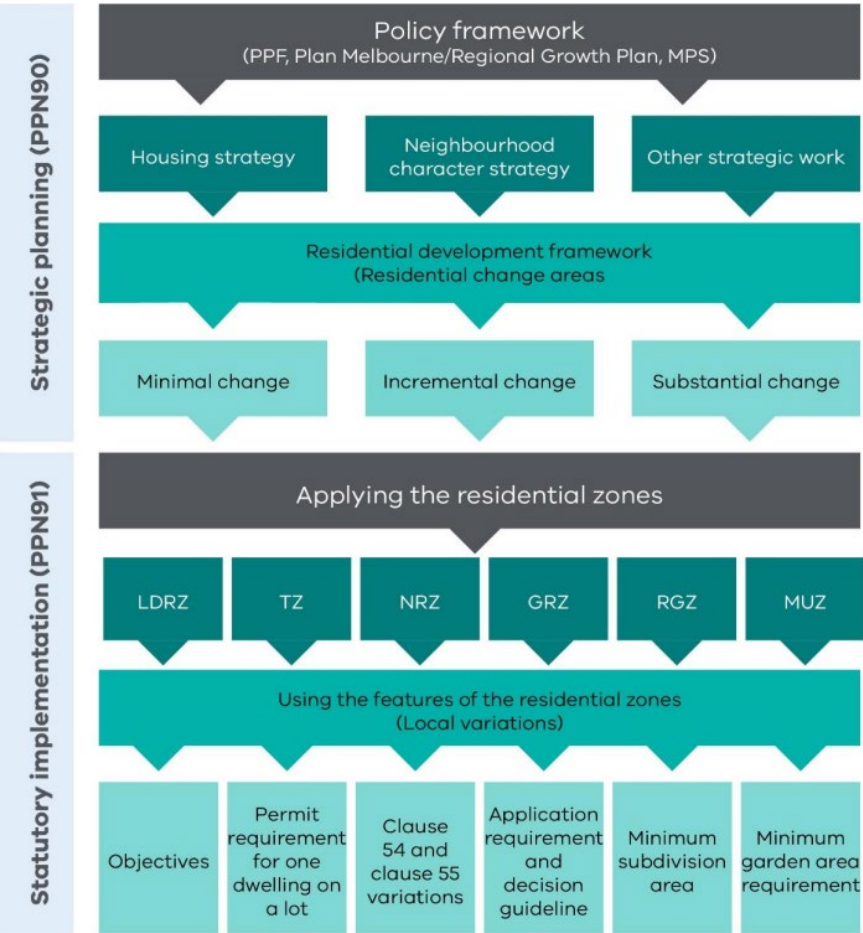
This report acknowledges the guidance of Planning Practice Note 90 (PPN90) for the considerations of a Neighbourhood Character Study, which will provide the foundation for the preferred character in the next stage.

In line with PPN90, this Strategy should:

- Consider both the public and the private realm;
- Provide a strategic direction for neighbourhood character to guide future development through preferred neighbourhood character statements or neighbourhood character objectives;
- Identify the comparative significance of each neighbourhood character area. Assess the significance of the area, including comparisons with other parts of the municipality but also with the wider region.
- Provide basis for neighbourhood character statements, policies, objectives and local variations to clause 54 and clause 55 being included in residential zone structures or other overlays.

Importantly, the neighbourhood character strategy should demonstrate that housing and other strategic objectives have not been prejudiced when determining areas for the protection of existing neighbourhood character.

Figure 3: Balancing housing growth and protection of neighbourhood character



Planning Practice Note 90

2.2 Methodology

All places comprise their own character. However, often some residential areas and particularly newer neighbourhoods can be considered to have no or little character, or less valued. It is important to understand that these descriptions generally confuse neighbourhood character with attractiveness.

Conversely, defining areas of distinct character is more straight forward. This is because these places often comprise stronger more dominant features which can be highly consistent, enabling a clear distinction to be evident. Often areas comprising a strong character can also be 'valued' by the local community, which heightens the importance of maintaining the prevailing character.

Therefore, describing neighbourhood character requires a qualitative assessment and the exercise of judgement about which features and characteristics determine the neighbourhood character of an area.

Consistent with Practice Note 43 (PPN43) we undertook a comprehensive process to determine the existing Neighbourhood Character Types and Precincts across established residential areas in the Townships.

The process within this report comprised the following steps:

- Review of Daylesford Neighbourhood Character Study 2002 (Background document' in Clause 72.08 Hepburn Planning scheme). **Daylesford only;**
- Spatial Analysis – GIS mapping;
- Desktop Analysis – Nearmap and Google Earth Streetview review; and
- Fieldwork.

Review of Daylesford Neighbourhood Character Study 2002 (Planisphere, 2002)

In 2002, Council commissioned a Neighbourhood Character Study, which outlined valued character attributes for Daylesford, with input from the broader community. Subsequently, the 2002 Neighbourhood Character Study also underpins the Design and Development Overlays and Neighbourhood Character Overlays currently applied across the residential zones.

The 2002 study provides a comprehensive outline of neighbourhood character elements and influences for majority of the residential areas, which in most instances will remain relevant to this study. A review of the development pattern that has happened between 2007-2023 and level of intactness for valued character attributes has been undertaken to determine the validity of the previous work. It has been informed by background analysis, Council's development approval database, detailed site visits and community consultation.

The analysis begins to provide insight into areas that now share common characteristics, and provides the foundation for identifying broad existing character types and precincts as part of this Neighbourhood Character Study 2023.

Spatial Analysis

Utilising available GIS data, Hansen Partnership prepared the following analysis maps to document the following key character parameters of the established residential areas:

- Planning Zones;
- Planning Overlays;
- Terrain;
- Natural Environment and Climate Change Risks;
- Ecological Vegetation Classes;
- Lot Size;
- Frontage Width;
- Access and Movement;
- Community Facilities and Open Space;
- Urban Structure; and
- Recent Permit Activity.

These Analysis Maps are contained within Chapter 3 in the standalone reports.

Desktop Analysis

Utilising a combination of both Nearmap (high resolution and up to date aerial photography and Google Earth Street View, Hansen undertook detailed desktop inspections to review and assess the existing neighbourhood character of the established residential areas to determine key characteristics and define character precinct types and their extent.

This was an iterative process and was subject to refinement through fieldwork and on-going review by Council.

Fieldwork

Extensive fieldwork was carried out in April 2023 to traverse the established residential areas, review and refine precinct types and their extent and exact boundaries, as well as document the existing character of each precinct.

The desktop analysis and fieldwork culminated into identification of broad neighbourhood character types and specific character precincts spread across the established residential neighbourhoods.

2.3 What is Not Character?

Heritage

Heritage places (both individual and in precincts) provide a direct link with the past and early township character across the municipality.

However, it is important to distinguish between heritage and character. It is acknowledged that character encompasses area based controls, whereas heritage can be applied to site specific places (public and private realms) or be precinct based.

Heritage controls in the Hepburn Planning Scheme are specific to retaining and restoring a heritage place in a manner consistent with understood heritage practice (The Burra Charter). Neighbourhood character addresses matters pertaining with enhancement, or protection of an area's distinct identity, or valued attributes between built form and landscape - not its history. Character studies principally evaluate the interplay of built form, vegetation and topographical elements in the public and private domain, with reference to the style and age of buildings where relevant. They place a much greater emphasis on visual evidence – the look of an area - than heritage studies.

The heritage of the Shire, evident in its towns and landscapes, encompasses the following key historic themes (Hepburn Heritage Strategy 2020-2030) :

- The First Nation's people: Aboriginal landscape
- Inhabiting the land – cultural landscapes
- Water – harnessing water for mining, farming and the environment
- Water – mineral springs
- Living with the environment- Farmers commons an mining forest commons
- Utilising natural resources – mining and building settlements
- Governing- gold commissioners camps
- Cultural life – well being and tourism
- Development of towns and settlements

Council is undertaking ongoing review of heritage places across the Shire.

Amenity

In Victoria, there is a statutory distinction between the concept of amenity and the concept of neighbourhood character.

Amenity refers to the quality of living and comfort, including factors such as overlooking and privacy, access to sunlight and warmth, private open space, shelter from wind, feeling of safety, human scale, low noise levels, viewsheds and the borrowed landscape. Character, on the other hand, is about the characteristics of the area that make one place different from another such as the architectural style, vegetation type, hard and soft surfaces and other physical elements that make up a place.

This distinction is not readily understood by the community – most people use the terms interchangeably.



2.4 Broad Character Types

Hepburn Shire contains a variety of unique heritage and landscape settings that make a significant contribution to the character of the residential areas. Given this unique character, the standard Neighbourhood Character types used in other parts of Victoria are not appropriate. Consequently, a more tailored approach to the neighbourhood character types are necessary to reflect these qualities.

Across the townships established residential areas, 4 broad character types were identified. These character types distil the townships residential character into broad areas, largely defined by lot size, density and landscape attributes. The 4 broad character types are as follows:

TOWNSHIP

Township consists of residential areas in a garden setting close to the town centre. Allotments are generally less than 1,600m² with varying degrees of era of development, vegetation and topographical conditions.

LIFESTYLE

Lifestyle consists of spacious residential areas on a mix of allotments sizes. Dwellings are sited with generally large setbacks from property boundaries with varying degrees of era of development, vegetation and topographical conditions.

RURAL

Rural consists of large allotments set within rural areas

BOULEVARDS

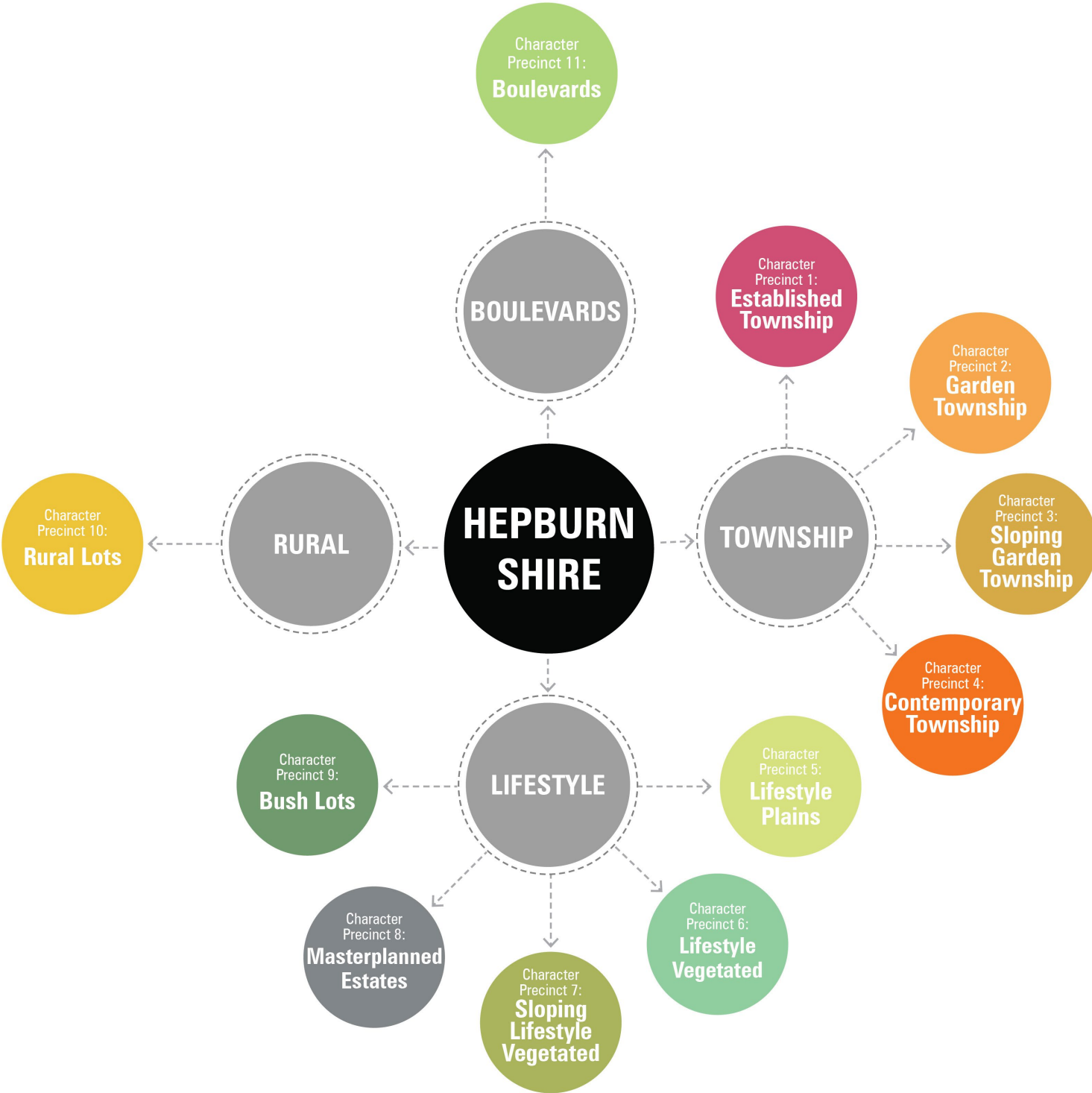
Boulevard consists formal avenue canopy tree plantings within the public realm

2.5 Character Precincts

The 4 Broad Character Types (Township, Lifestyle, Rural and Boulevards) are then further refined into precincts, whereby more subtle and nuanced character distinctions are identified. These character elements typically relate to more detailed streetscape elements, era of development, architectural features, vegetation, topography, as well as to reflect some 'place' distinctions such as development estates.

Within each precinct an assessment of 12 key character elements was undertaken to assess the predominance and consistency of these elements. **Appendix A: Fieldwork Checklist** identifies the elements where there are predominant instances, some instances and few instances. The interplay between these instances impact on the predominance and consistency of elements - making up the broad character types and precincts. This resulted in the **4 broad character types** being divided into **11 existing character precincts**, as shown overleaf.

The precincts are applied across the townships to ensure there is a coordinated approach between each of the townships. This allows for appropriate standard policy responses (neighbourhood character statements, policies, objectives and local variations to clause 54 and clause 55 being included in residential zone schedules, a Neighbourhood Character Overlay or other overlay) which is consistent with neighbourhood character studies in other parts of Victoria. More detailed key existing characteristics are identified for each township, particularly in terms of lot size, setbacks, vegetation and streetscape conditions, which will assist with the preparation of the preferred character statements in the next stage.



4 Broad Character Types & 11 Character Precincts

The 11 Existing Character Precincts identified within the townships are outlined below.

TOWNSHIP



Character Precinct 1: Established Township *(Defined by heritage streetscapes in a formal grid pattern)*



Character Precinct 2: Garden Township *(Typically consists of spacious in a garden setting residential areas)*



Character Precinct 3: Sloping Garden Township *(Typically consists of spacious residential areas in a garden setting on generally undulating topography ('resort spa town feel'))*



Character Precinct 4: Contemporary Township *(Defined by contemporary dwellings sited in a cul-de-sac on undulating topography)*

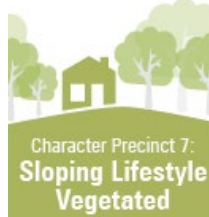
LIFESTYLE



Character Precinct 5: Lifestyle Plains *(Defined by its open setting on generally flat topography)*



Character Precinct 6: Lifestyle Vegetated *(Defined by semi-rural character in vegetated areas on flat topography)*



Character Precinct 7: Sloping Lifestyle Vegetated *(Defined by semi-rural and bush character in vegetated areas on undulating topography)*



Character Precinct 8: Masterplanned Estates *(Defined by spacious contemporary dwellings sited in curvilinear lopper or cul-de-sac patterns)*



Character Precinct 9: Bush Lots *(Defined by heavy vegetated areas in a bush landscape setting)*

RURAL

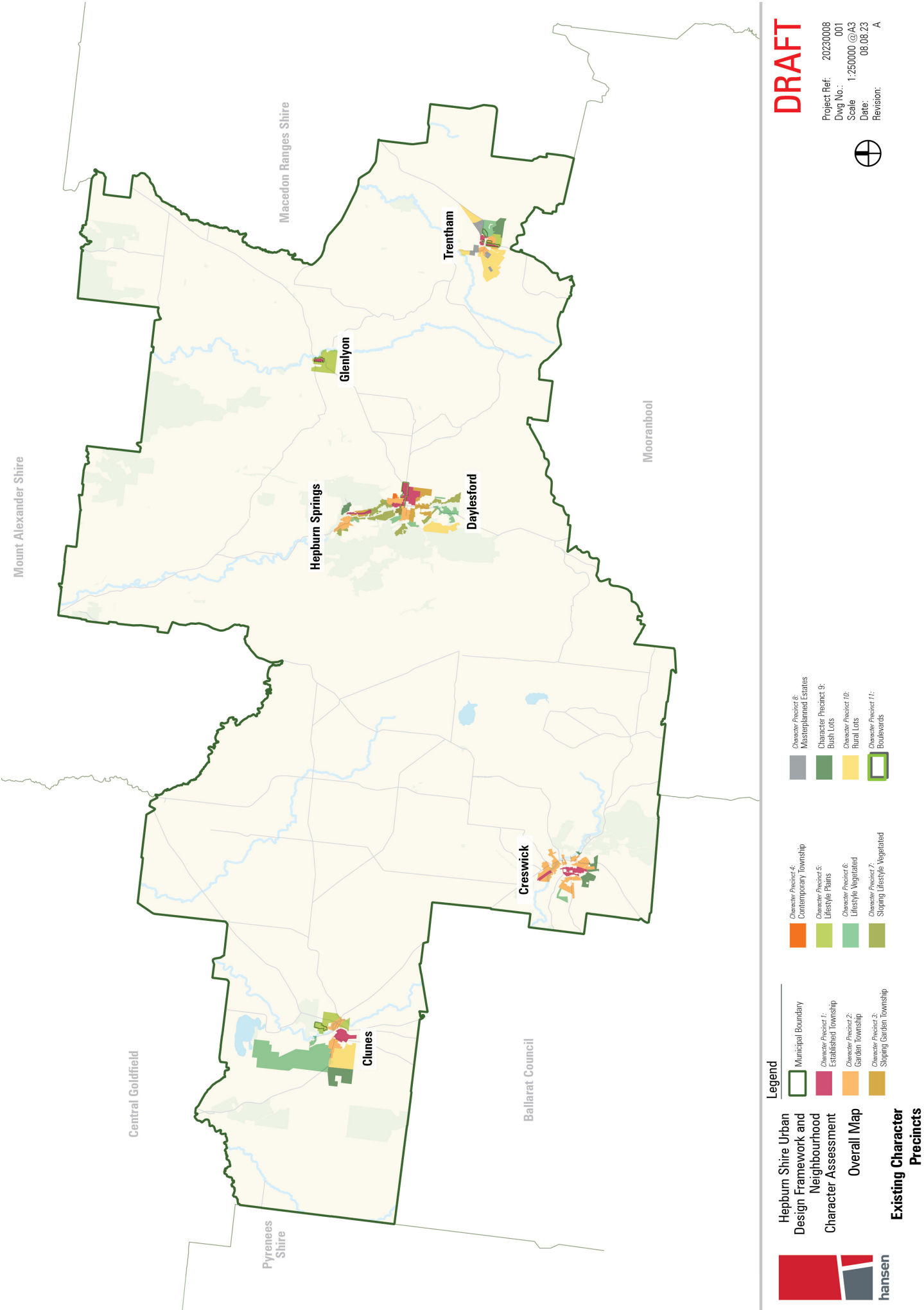


Character Precinct 10: Rural Lots *(Defined by large allotments set within rural areas)*

BOULEVARDS



Character Precinct 11: Boulevards *(Defined by formal avenue canopy tree plantings)*



Urban Design Framework

3

3.1 What is an Urban Design Framework?

An Urban Design Framework (UDF) is a planning tool that provides a framework for managing change and setting clear directions for the future development and investment of a place across both public and private land over time. They are intended to clearly articulate a 'vision' for what a place could be in the future and, as such, act as a catalyst for positive change within the built environment. In determining the preferred character of a place, community values are considered alongside the needs of government departments (local and state), service authorities and commercial stakeholders to ensure a viable plan is introduced, which can be supported by all users and stakeholders.

3.2 Methodology

Consistent with Practice Note 17: Urban Design Frameworks, we are undertaking a comprehensive process to review the existing town centres and surrounding and establish an overall framework and directions to implement within the Structure Plan. The study areas of each town centre were agreed to by Council at a scale to provide a more detailed appreciation of such elements as:

- Crossings;
- Seating;
- Crossovers;
- Footpaths;
- Built form;
- Pedestrian connections;
- Public art;
- Outdoor dining, shared spaces;
- Verges, garden beds, landscaping;
- Signage;
- Active frontages;
- Open spaces and plazas;
- Carparking; and
- Any potential redevelopment sites.

The process comprises the following steps:

- **Background Analysis;**
- **Fieldwork;**
- **Issues and Opportunities; and**
- **Vision, Objectives and Urban Design Framework.**

Background Analysis

Utilising available GIS data, Hansen Partnership prepared the following analysis maps to document the following key urban design parameters of the townships (at a wider extent):

- Planning Zones;
- Planning Overlays;
- Terrain;
- Natural Environment and Climate Change Risks;
- Ecological Vegetation Classes;
- Lot Size;
- Frontage Width;
- Access and Movement;
- Community Facilities and Open Space;
- Urban Structure; and
- Recent Permit Activity.

These Analysis Maps for each of the towns are contained within Chapter 3 in each township report.

A series of more detailed urban design parameters at the extent of the study area (agreed with Council) have been reviewed and documented under the following themes:

- Urban Structure;
- Access and Movement;
- Landscape and Public Realm; and
- Built Form and Image.

Fieldwork

Extensive fieldwork was carried out in April 2023 to review and document the detailed urban design elements of the town centres and surrounds. The desktop analysis and fieldwork outlined an understanding of the existing conditions and key implications.

Issues and Opportunities

The Background Analysis and Fieldwork provide a blueprint in understanding the issues and opportunities in the town centres and surrounds. The identification of the issues and opportunities has been established under the 6 key themes described below.

Support viability considering heritage, landscape & viewlines

Manage change within the town centres, while **retaining unique characteristics including heritage streetscapes, landscape and viewlines**

Key Destinations 'Gems'

Recognition of key destinations ('gems') **unlocking significant assets of the township**. Opportunities include improved connections and wayfinding to these attractions

Identity & Storytelling

Reinforce a **sense of place** linked to the township's valued historic and landscape qualities. Opportunities include public realm improvements through remembering the past

Amenity & Safety

Identification of elements that contribute to the townships **attractiveness, comfort and functionality**. Opportunities include street tree planting, seating, crossings, pause points, wayfinding, equitable access

Biodiversity & Climate Change

Support **biodiversity and climate change** initiatives. Opportunities include enhancement of biodiversity corridors, improved vegetation maintenance and community awareness raising.

Wider Connections

Consideration of linkages in to **broader networks** of the township. Opportunities include improved connections (walking and cycling), wayfinding and public realm amenities

Vision, Objectives & Urban Design Framework

Based on an analysis of the issues and opportunities and feedback from community consultation, a Vision, Objectives and Urban Design Framework has been developed to manage change and development of the town centres and surrounds.

Engagement Summary

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4.1 Engagement Summary

Community engagement for the preliminary stage of the structure planning program was undertaken between 17 May and 2 July 2023. This engagement covered the townships of Clunes, Creswick, Trentham, Daylesford-Hepburn Springs and Glenlyon. The engagement process used different engagement tools including Shire-wide letters, face-to-face pop-up sessions, display of discussion papers, project overview on the Hepburn Shire website, online surveys and engagement pool of interested community members.

A total of 105 people participated in the local engagement sessions, and 499 participants took part in the online surveys.

At a Shire-wide level (for all townships as part of this study), respondents identified many similar traits, indicating that participants have similar values in their respective townships.

Survey participants recognised the rural character as one of the most valued features, with 403 responses. Additionally, the town's unique heritage features were particularly valued in Daylesford-Hepburn Springs and Clunes, with approximately 223 responses.

Survey participants also identified similar valued attributes that contribute to the neighbourhood character in each area of the municipality. Common answers included:

- Large street trees (approximately 333 responses)
- Heritage (approximately 306 responses)
- Topography (approximately 256 responses)
- Wide streets and nature strips (approximately 268 responses)
- Views and sightlines (except Trentham and Clunes) (approximately 159 responses)

In terms of character protection, survey participants responded that they would like to see the following protected:

- Heritage (except Glenlyon) (approximately 68 responses)
- Rural town & village feel (approximately 29 responses)
- Landscape and views (approximately 15 responses)
- Street trees and forested areas (approximately 20 responses)
- Streetscapes (approximately 14 responses)

Particularly in relation to the protection of heritage places, survey participants responded that they would like to see protected the following:

- Historic homes (approximately 360 responses)
- Avenues of honour, trees and gardens (approximately 373 responses)
- Streetscapes (e.g. bluestone drains and dry stone walls) (approximately 383 responses)

Survey participants also identified the following existing features that they would like to see extended in the new developments:

- Trees, greenspace and vegetation (approximately 33 responses)
- History and heritage (except Glenlyon and Trentham) (approximately 37 responses)
- Large blocks, wide streets and low density (except Glenlyon and Creswick) (approximately 28 responses)

The process of establishing existing character precincts for the townships has been informed by survey responses and identified valued attributes. Further engagement will be undertaken in the next stage of the project to receive feedback on the preferred character for the townships.

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