

DRAFT

**DRAFT
MURTOA
STRUCTURE
PLAN**

APRIL 2026

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Yarriambiack Shire Council acknowledges that the activities of this Council are being held under the traditional skies and in the waterways and lands of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjall, Wergala and Jupagulk people.

We pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging.

Murtoa was founded on country belonging originally to the Jaada people and its name is believed to mean *Home of the Lizard* to the local Aboriginal people.

The Yarriambiack Shire Council declares its commitment to Aboriginal reconciliation. We acknowledge the traditional people and the cultural significance and history of the land. Yarriambiack Shire Council is aware of the impact of alienation and other forms of injustice against indigenous people and through acknowledgement and understanding of these injustices, Council is committed to redressing them and moving forward together.

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The Murtoa Structure Plan was prepared for **Yarriambiack Shire Council** with assistance from the **Department of Transport and Planning** and in collaboration with:



1. CONTEXT

MURTOA

Murtoa is Yarriambiack's second-largest town and is located in the southern reaches of the Shire, approximately 40 kilometres south of Warracknabeal.

Murtoa is on the lands of the Jardwadjali and Jaadwa people, whose traditional lands occupy the lands of the upper Wimmera River watershed.

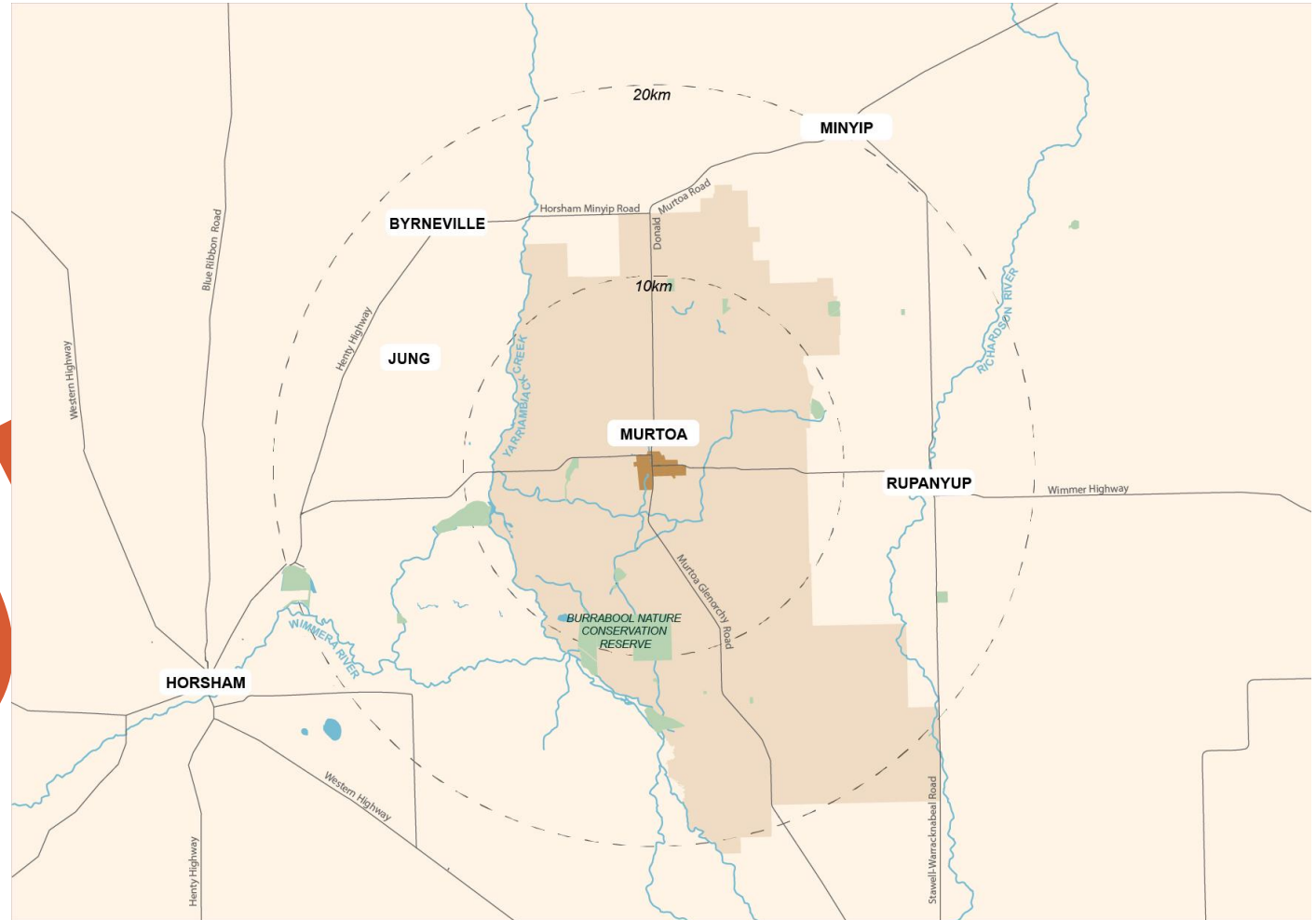
The town is home to a resident population of 765 people. The population of the town is expected to decline and age towards 2044, which presents challenges to the maintenance of service provision and the economy.

The town is identified as serving a sub-regional role in service delivery to the local community, as well as other towns in the southern region of the Shire, including Rupanyup, Minyip and Jung. It is located approximately 30 kilometres east of the larger regional centre of Horsham, and many residents commute to the larger centre for work.

Murtoa is home to Australia's largest grain receival terminal, highlighting the significant role of the grain industry in the local and regional economy.

Tourism is also an important local industry, with significant heritage assets and the Murtoa Big Weekend in the first weekend of October.

The town is well serviced by open space, with Rabi Park and Lake Marma providing key recreational space and landscape benefit.



1.1 POLICY & STRATEGIC CONTEXT

1.1.1 ROLE & FUNCTION

The Strategic Framework Plan at Clause 02.04 of the Yarriambiack Planning Scheme (the 'Planning Scheme') identifies Murtoa as a sub-district service centre. Its role is described in Clause 02.03-1 (Settlement) as:

Murtoa is a subdistrict centre and plays an important role in the handling and transportation of grain. It has potential to continue to be a dormitory town for Horsham. It needs to maintain local service centre functions to cater to the needs of township residents and surrounding rural farming community. The town offers attractive housing stock, built heritage, recreational facilities and a rural ambiance that together creates a character and lifestyle that is valued by the community.

Beyond the higher level description of Murtoa's role, there is generally limited guidance for Murtoa's future use and development within the Planning Scheme. There is no township framework plan, settlement boundary or local level policy direction.

State, regional and local policy directions within the Planning Scheme encourage the provision of more diverse and affordable housing within the Shire's higher order towns, including Murtoa.

Clause 11.01-1R 'Settlement – Wimmera Southern Mallee' seeks to provide some local and sub-regional services in Murtoa.

The Planning Scheme seeks to support the ongoing economic viability of the town, and its key industries of agriculture, education and tourism are all supported.

Built environment and heritage policies encourage the preservation and conservation of the town's sites of heritage significance.

There are limited environmental constraints for the town identified within the planning scheme.

Beyond the planning scheme, the strategic directions and the role and function of Murtoa is also influenced by Council policies, including:

- Yarriambiack Shire Council Plan 2025-2029.
- Yarriambiack Shire Economic Development Strategy 2026-2029.
- Yarriambiack Shire Housing Strategy 2023.
- Yarriambiack Shire Master Environmental Strategy 2024-2034.
- Yarriambiack Shire Tourism Strategy 2023-2027.
- Murtoa Recreation Reserve Masterplan 2023.

1.1.2 WIMMERA SOUTHERN MALLEE REGIONAL GROWTH PLAN

The Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Growth Plan identifies the role of Murtoa as a Town, which is expected to comprise a diverse population and housing, reticulated water and sewerage and provide sub-regional services.

The town will provide services and facilities to support the local community and surrounding towns. Residential growth is expected to be accommodated by infill development and demand for the expansion of the town is not expected in the short to medium term.

1.1.3 PLAN FOR VICTORIA

Plan for Victoria is a statewide land use planning strategy which sets the overarching vision for the development of Victoria's cities, towns and regions towards 2050.

The Plan's strategic directions are centered around five key pillars:

- **Pillar 1: Housing for all Victorians.**
- **Pillar 2: Accessible Jobs and Services.**
- **Pillar 3: Great Places, Suburbs and Towns.**
- **Pillar 4: Sustainable Environments.**
- **Pillar 5: Self-determination and Caring for Country.**

Plan for Victoria identifies that an additional 2.24 million homes will be needed across Victoria to house the expected population of the state over the next 30 years.

In order to deliver sufficient housing, the Plan sets housing targets for each local government area.

Yarriambiack Shire has a housing target of 300 new homes by 2050. This is approximately 12 new homes per year, every year between now and 2050.

This is a municipal-wide target and Plan for Victoria does not specify where new homes should be located. However, it is anticipated that Murtoa will accommodate some of the expected future housing supply.

1.1 POLICY & STRATEGIC CONTEXT

ZONING & OVERLAY MAP

ZONING & OVERLAYS

ZONING

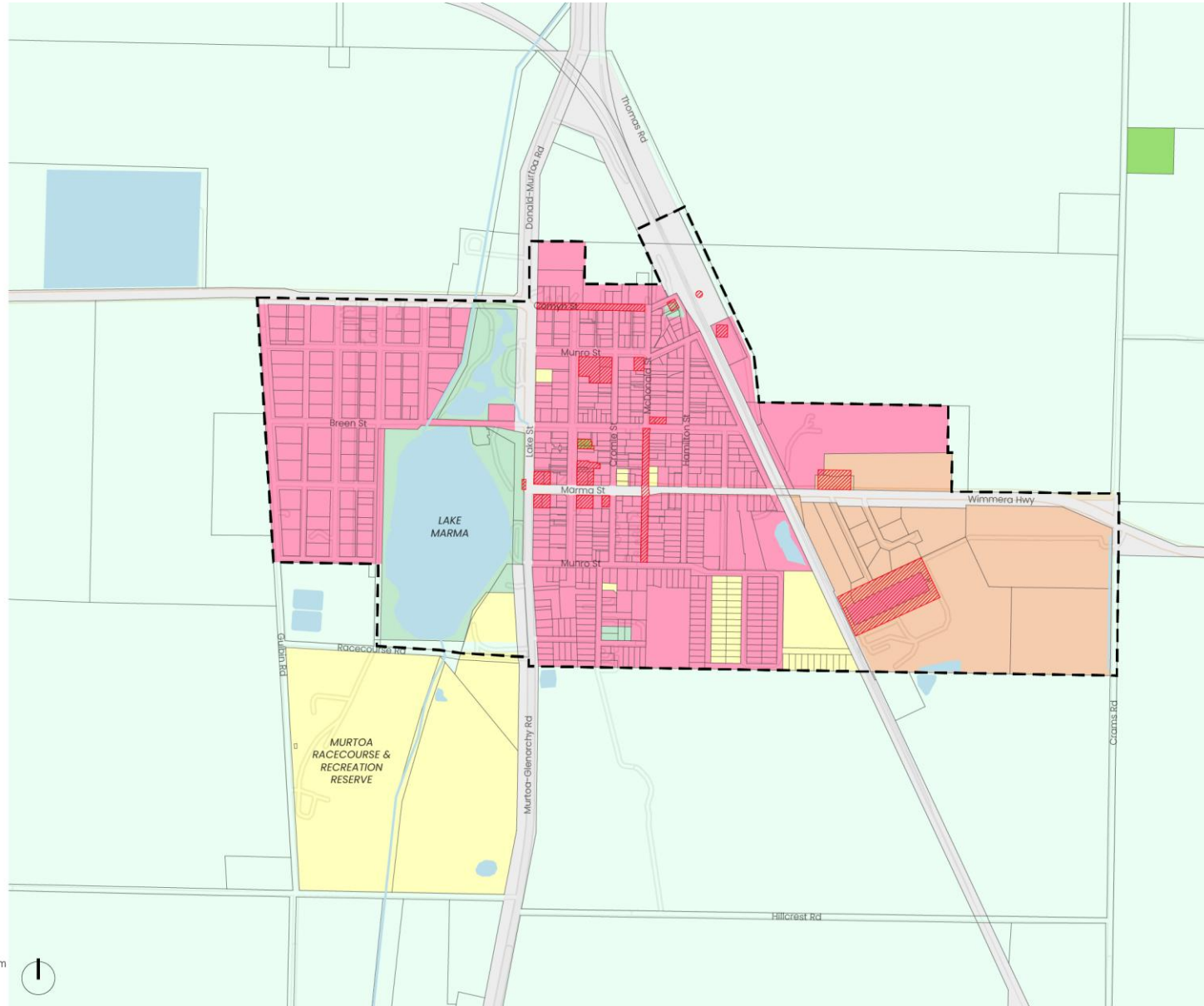
- Township
- Public Use
- Farming
- Public Park and Recreation
- Industrial I
- Public Conservation and Resource

OVERLAYS

- Heritage

BOUNDARIES

- Strategic Settlement Boundary



1.2 POPULATION & ECONOMIC PROFILE

POPULATION

The resident population of Murtoa was 765 people in 2024 (.id Consulting, 2025).

The Population and Housing Forecasts (.id Consulting, 2025) expect that Murtoa's resident population will decline to a resident population of 653 people in 2044. This represents a decline of 14.7 per cent of the town's population. The expected decline in the town's population is higher than the municipal average.

The median age of residents is 51.3 years old. Working age people (between 15-64) comprise approximately 54 per cent of the population.

Statistically, Murtoa comprises the lowest proportion of working age population within the Shire. The proportion of working age population is expected to decrease to 45.1 per cent by 2044, alongside an increase in people aged 65+ to 41.6 per cent of the population.

Key workers account for 31 per cent of all households. These workers represent a smaller presence compared to local and regional averages. The median age of key workers is 57, which is the highest in the municipality.

The declining and ageing of the local population has significant implications for the provision of services, housing and the local and regional economies.



Rotunda at Lake Marma Reserve

RESIDENTIAL LAND SUPPLY

Murtoa has an identified capacity for an additional 287 dwellings, predominantly through infill development.

There is a forecast demand for 34 new dwellings between 2022-2044 within Murtoa, leading to an annual assumed rate of development of approximately two (2) to four (4) dwellings per year.

ECONOMY & INDUSTRY

Agriculture is a cornerstone industry in Murtoa and is significant in the regional context. The grain terminal and grain handling facility provide significant local agricultural and industrial employment opportunities within the town. Agricultural efficiency gains are expected to result in a long term reduction in on-farm employment.

Murtoa functions as a local retail / commercial and education service centre. The extent of child care and health care services provided within Murtoa are generally lower than expected for a sub-regional centre within the Shire due to the town's proximity to the larger regional centre of Horsham, which provides these services.

Social assistance, education and training are other dominant local employers within the town. Demand for healthcare and education workers is expected to remain steady.

1.2 POPULATION & ECONOMIC PROFILE

POPULATION PROFILE (2024)

755 Resident population

653 Forecast resident population in 2044

49.8 Median age

54.6% Working age population

27.6% Population aged over 65

1.8% Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Population

4.6% Born overseas

1.9% Speak a language other than English

41.2% Have a long term health condition

\$179 Median weekly rent

\$640 Median monthly mortgage payment

ECONOMIC PROFILE (2024)

235 Workers

18.6% Residents work in education and training

12.1% Residents work in agriculture

12.1% Residents work in health care and social assistance

9.0% Residents work in manufacturing

9.0% Residents work in construction

8.3% Residents work in retail trade



1.3 ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

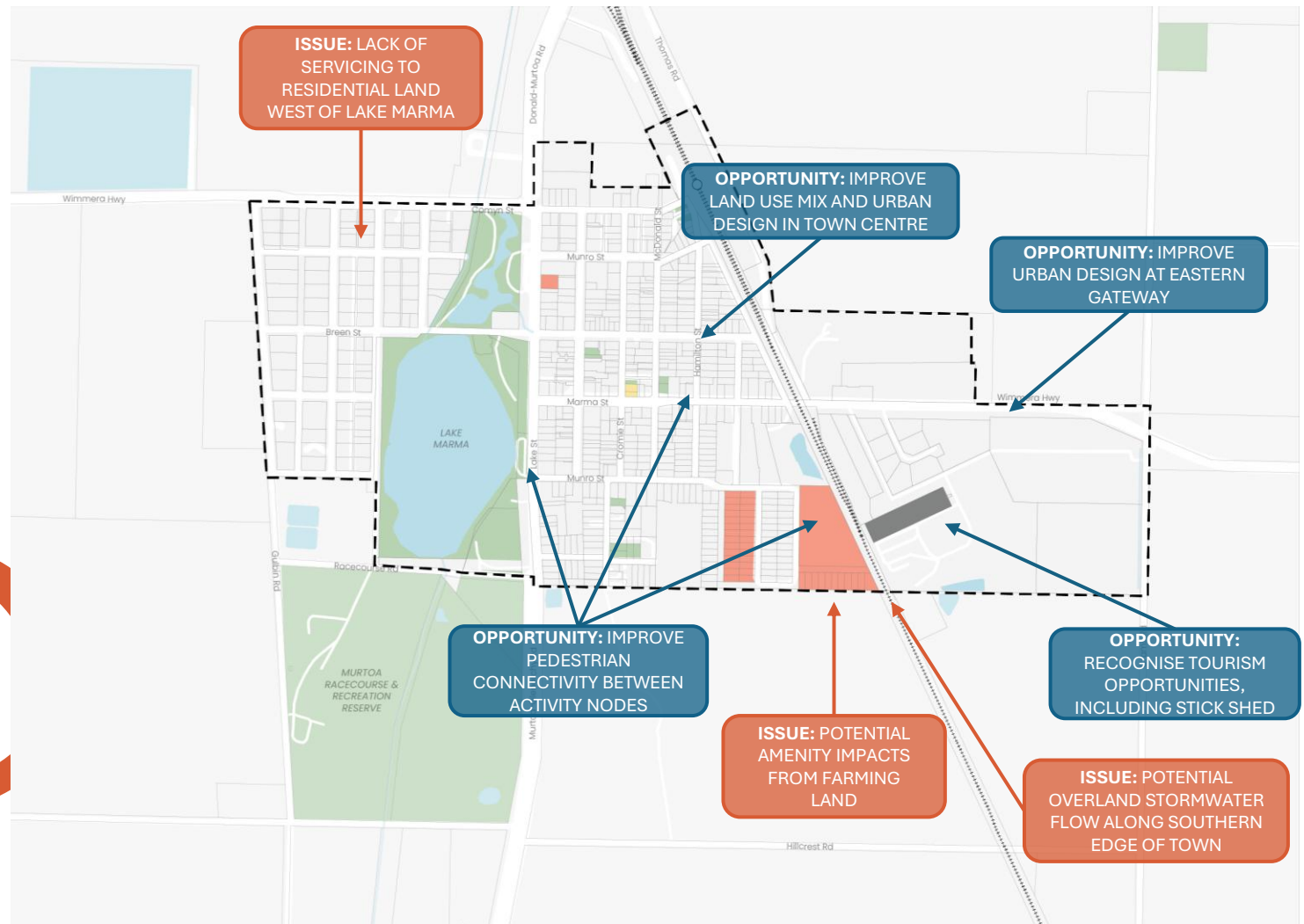
BACKGROUND & TECHNICAL STUDIES

As part of the development of the Murtoa Structure Plan, a series of investigations have been undertaken to identify issues and opportunities. The following technical assessments were prepared to inform the Murtoa Structure Plan Background Report (the Background Report):

- Yarriambiack Shire – Township population and housing profiles (.id Consultants).
- Yarriambiack Shire – Township economic profiles (.id Consultants).
- Yarriambiack Structure Plans – Strategic Bushfire Assessment (Terralogic).
- Yarriambiack Structure Plans – Movement & Transport Assessment (Quantum Traffic).

The findings of these technical assessments and Council stakeholder engagement in March 2025 informed the preparation of the Murtoa Structure Plan Background Report, which identified key issues and opportunities for the development of the Structure Plan.

The spatial elements of those issues and opportunities are reflected on the issues and opportunities map.



2. VISION

Murtoa will develop as a vibrant, inclusive and sustainable town that offers a diverse range of housing to meet the needs of its community and support ageing in place.

Murtoa will support economic vitality by maintaining and expanding essential services and community infrastructure, while supporting the growth of the grain production industry.

Murtoa will celebrate its history and culture and be a key destination for tourism.



Murtoa Water Tower and Museum

2. VISION

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK PLAN

MURTOA STRUCTURE PLAN

EXISTING FEATURES

- Education
- Hospital
- Open Space
- Water bodies
- Murtoa Stick Shed
- Railway

LAND USE & ZONING

- Heritage Overlay
- Investigate rezoning to the Commercial 1 Zone
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage
- Facilitate smaller lots and encourage compact dwelling sizes to increase the supply of smaller format housing for key workers and an aging population rezoning to the Commercial 1 Zone

STRATEGIC REDEVELOPMENT

- Strategic Settlement Boundary
- ✱ Gateway

TRANSPORT & MOVEMENT

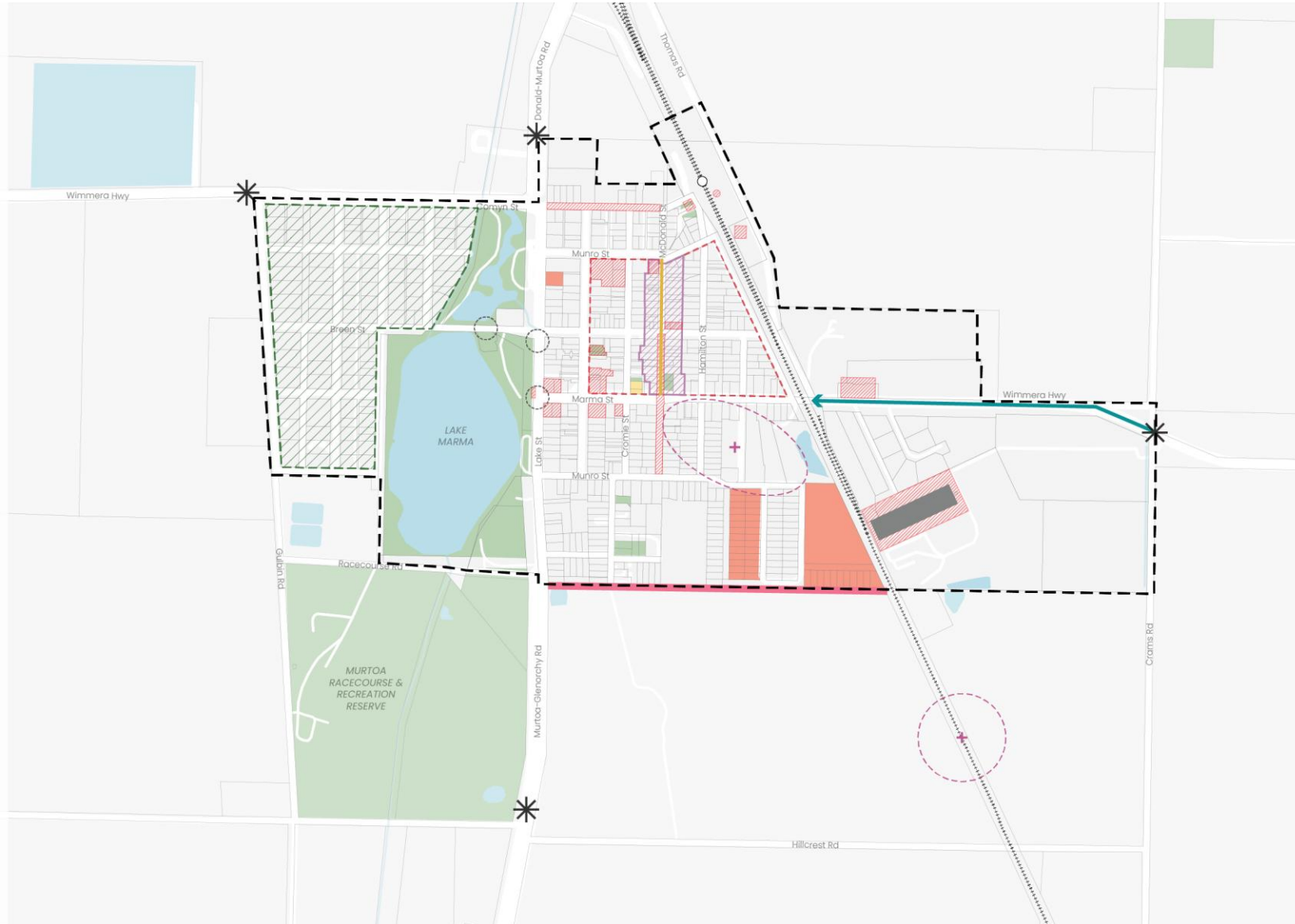
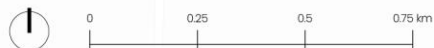
- Improve presentation of gateway from the east
- Facilitate improvements to pedestrian safety, through pedestrian crossings, safety islands and other measures
- Investigate and implement measures to manage interface with farming land
- Investigate potential off-road, mid-block pedestrian connections

URBAN DESIGN & STREETScape

- Support improved urban design on McDonald Street

INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICES

- Investigate feasibility of providing water, wastewater and electricity services



3. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

3.1 HOUSING

The majority of housing in Murtoa is made up of single, detached dwellings (94.7%), with only 4.4 per cent of residents living in medium density housing.

The largest household type in the town is lone person households (35 per cent), followed by couples without children (24.9 per cent) and then couples with children (20.2 per cent). This household composition results in many dwellings within the town containing surplus bedrooms, which leads to a mismatch between supply and demand.

There are many vacant lots within the town, with servicing and the provision of infrastructure a key limitation to new housing west of Lake Marma.

Housing growth within Murtoa is expected to be modest, in accordance with the Shire's housing targets at Clause 16.01-1S, which anticipate an additional 300 dwellings across the Shire by 2051. Population and housing forecasts estimate an average growth of 2-4 dwellings per year.

While the town has adequate urban-zoned land to meet its housing demand in numerical terms, there is a need for more diverse and affordable housing options to attract and maintain workers for key local industries and to support ageing in place.

There are also opportunities to leverage Murtoa's proximity to the larger regional centre of Horsham to enable housing growth and a sustainable community to support the ongoing viability of the town's businesses and community services.

Future planning for housing in Murtoa will prioritise diversifying the current housing stock to better align with the evolving demographic needs for key workers, ageing in place and support population stability.

To support improved housing diversity, smaller, easily maintained housing and smaller lots will be encouraged, particularly in close proximity to the town centre. Specialised aged care accommodation to facilitate ageing in place will also be encouraged.

There is also an opportunity to support increased infill housing by addressing servicing and infrastructure challenges, particularly to the land west of Lake Marma.

OBJECTIVE 1: To facilitate increased housing choice and diversity within Murtoa that responds to community needs.

Strategy 1.1: Facilitate a range of more affordable and diverse housing types to support ageing in place and key workers.

- Action 1.1.1: Amend local policy to facilitate smaller lots and encourage compact dwelling sizes to increase supply of smaller format housing for key workers and an ageing population in proximity of McDonald Street.

- Action 1.1.2: Advocate for and support the provision of specialised aged care accommodation, including retirement villages and residential aged care facilities.
- Action 1.1.3: Advocate for the provision of affordable rental accommodation to support key workers.

Strategy 1.2: To ensure that new housing is well designed and responsive to the valued character of Murtoa.

- Action 1.2.1: Develop and implement built form objectives and strategies into the Planning Scheme to guide housing design.

3.2 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INDUSTRY

Murtoa is home to Australia's inland largest grain receiving terminal and grain production is the most significant employer within the local and regional economy.

Much of the industrial land on the eastern edge of the town is occupied by low scale grain handling and grain storage facilities that support grain production from surrounding agricultural land. Vacancy rates of industrial land are low (at approximately 8 per cent).

It is expected that forecast demand for industrial land can be accommodated within existing vacant industrial land in the short to medium term. There is a need to monitor industrial land supply in the medium term to ensure sufficient land availability to continue to support industry.

RETAIL & BUSINESS

While Murtoa is designated as a sub-regional centre, there is a relatively limited range of retail and business uses within the town.

There is a large volume of escape expenditure to the larger centre of Horsham, which offers a wider range of retail, business and community services.

Employment forecasts do not anticipate significant demand for retail, office or other commercial floorspace.

There is no clear or discernible 'main street' commercial area. Wayfinding signage throughout the town directs people to McDonald Street as the town centre. McDonald Street contains some commercial uses, including a café, hardware store and supermarket.

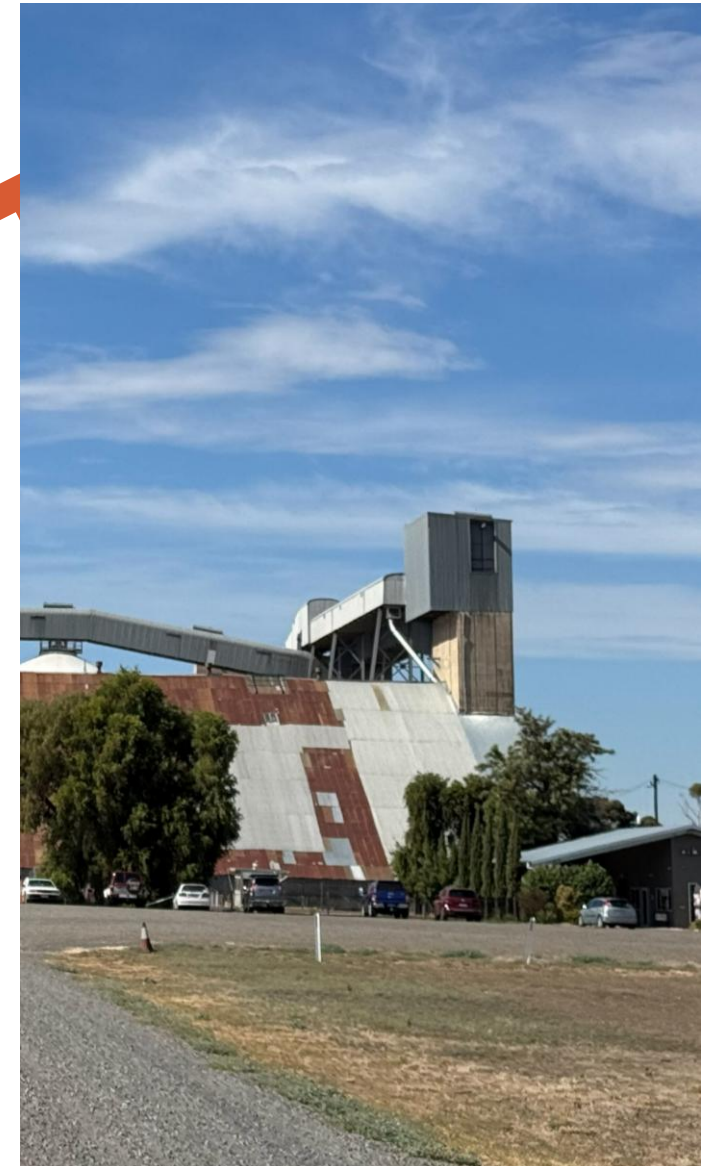
However, commercial and civic activity is also found along Comyn Street, Cromie Street, Duncan Street and Marma Street. This dispersion of commercial activity results in high vacancy rates within McDonald Street, which impacts negatively on the vibrancy of the town centre. There is an opportunity to investigate whether applying the Commercial 1 Zone will help to reinforce the role of the commercial centre.

There is an opportunity to consolidate commercial activity along McDonald Street and activate and enliven this streetscape to attract services and community activity. The ongoing viability of services and business is important to support the local community.

TOURISM

Tourism is an important contributor to the broader Yarriambiack Shire economy. The Murtoa Stick Shed, the Old Water Tower, Museum Precinct and Silo Art are year-round tourist attractions.

The 'Big Weekend' held annually on the first weekend of October is a significant event for the town and the broader region.



Murtoa Stick Shed



McDonald Street

While these attractions and events are successful, there is limited capture of tourist spend. Insufficient accommodation and dining options causes shorter stay durations. The lack of accommodation is a significant issue during the Big Weekend, in particular. There is an opportunity to provide a range of accommodation options within Murtoa to support tourism activities.

OBJECTIVE 2: To support Murtoa's economic vitality.

Strategy 2.1: Revitalise McDonald Street as the commercial and civic heart of Murtoa.

- Action 2.1.1: Amend local policy to identify support for a diverse range of commercial, retail and service uses within McDonald Street.
- Action 2.1.2: Investigate rezoning McDonald Street between Degenhardt Street and Marma Street to the Commercial 1 Zone.
- Action 2.1.3: Amend local policy to provide strategies that encourage good design along McDonald Street.
- Action 2.1.4: Work with the Murtoa Progress Association to support the revitalisation of McDonald Street.

Strategy 2.2: Support tourist facilities and accommodation within Murtoa.

- Action 2.2.1: Amend local policy to facilitate the provision of diverse tourism accommodation to support overnight tourism stays.
- Action 2.2.2: Work with State Government and tourism operators to strengthen Murtoa's event tourism, including the Big Weekend.

Strategy 2.3: Support the ongoing operation of the grain processing and storage industry.

- Action 2.3.1: Monitor industrial land supply in the medium term to determine whether further industrial land is required.

3.3 BUILT ENVIRONMENT & HERITAGE

TOWN STRUCTURE

Murtoa has developed in a predominantly regular grid pattern. Streets generally align north-south or east-west, creating regular lot alignments. Lot sizes within the town vary, although there are limited examples of medium density housing within the town.

TOWN CHARACTER

Murtoa's character is defined by the high presence of single storey dwellings, with some limited two storey development present. Where two storey development does exist, it is typically older and it is evident that it has been used previously for commercial purposes.

The use of weatherboard and brick materials and pitched roof forms is common, generally reflecting the predominant materials and architectural styles of Murtoa's development. Site coverage is typically low, usually leaving open space around, in front and behind dwellings for formal garden settings. Street planting in residential areas is irregular in terms of its spacing, species and presence.

There is a discernible change in residential character generally west of Lake Marma. This area is characterised by larger single storey dwellings, on large lots. The subdivision pattern in this part of town is generally influenced by the lack of sewerage and the need to treat and maintain wastewater on-site.

Buildings along the more commercially-focused McDonald and Marma Streets are typically constructed to the front boundary and contain large extents of glazing. Some commercial buildings along these streets include verandahs and canopies over the footpath, although this is not a consistent feature.

There is a general lack of policy guidance within the Planning Scheme to support assessment of built form issues and response to neighbourhood character.

BUILT FORM HERITAGE

Murtoa contains a number of important heritage buildings which reflect the early development of the town as a prosperous grain settlement along the Melbourne to Adelaide railway line.

There are 15 buildings identified as individually significant heritage buildings, as well as two precincts along McDonald Street and Breen Street.

The Murtoa Stick Shed (Murtoa No. 1 Grain Store) is recognised on the Australian National Heritage List and the Victorian Heritage Register as an emblematic representation of the importance of the wheat industry to Australia's economy in the early to mid 20th century.

The Murtoa Water Tower is also included on the Victorian Heritage Register.

Council is aware that some of the individual and precinct heritage controls are incorrectly mapped within the planning scheme and require correction.

A Heritage Study Review is being undertaken and will identify potential corrections and additions to the overlay.

There is a general lack of policy guidance within the Yarriambaick Planning Scheme to support the assessment of heritage issues and ensuring new development appropriately protects sites of heritage significance.

GATEWAYS & APPROACHES

The major approaches to Murtoa are from the Wimmera Highway, which connects with Horsham (from the west) and St Arnaud (from the east). Secondary approaches are along Donald-Murtoa Road (from the north) and Murto-Glenorchy Road (from the south).

The entries to the town from the north, south and west are generally well maintained and visually appealing. The approaches from the north and west in particular include scenic vistas framed by the tree canopy and vegetation in Rabl Park.

The approach from the east passes through the main industrial area and the key vista is of covered grain storage and machinery. There is an opportunity to improve the presentation of this gateway through public realm landscaping to screen and soften the interface.

OBJECTIVE 3: To ensure that development contributes to the character and heritage of Murtoa.

Strategy 3.1: Ensure that development protects and enhances the valued heritage of the town.

- Action 3.1.1: Implement the findings of the Heritage Study Review into the planning scheme.
- Action 3.1.2: Introduce local policy guidance to support appropriate decision-making for sites of heritage significance.

Strategy 3.2: Ensure that development respects the valued character of the town.

- Action 3.2.1: Development and implement local policy guidance to support appropriate decision-making in relation to neighbourhood character.

Strategy 3.3: Improve the presentation of the eastern gateway entrance into Murtoa.

- Action 3.3.1: Undertake planting and landscaping within the public realm along the eastern gateway to improve the visual presentation of the entrance to the town.



Murtoa Railway Station

3.4 LANDSCAPE & ENVIRONMENT

BUSHFIRE

Most of Murtoa, including all land west of Lake Street and key community infrastructure such as Murtoa College and Bani Walup Kindergarten, is within a designated bushfire prone area.

There have been previous bushfire events approximately 6 kilometres west of the town.

The surrounding landscape is identified as a Type 1. There is the potential for bushfire due to fast moving grassfire or remote ember attack. However, the town generally has a relatively lower level of bushfire risk.

Consistent with settlement planning directions at Clause 13.02-1S 'Bushfire planning', the Structure Plan and Bushfire Assessment support directing growth and new development in infill locations, which have been identified as low risk, before developing sites adjacent to the grassland at the western edge of the town and Lake Marma.

There is a need to carefully manage vegetation and urban activity at the urban edges of the town to protect life and property from bushfire. Development at the urban edge should incorporate appropriate built form setbacks and hazard reduction measures.

FLOODING

Murtoa is relatively remote from watercourses, which results in a low risk of riverine flooding.

The topography of the town results in overland flow from the east of the town, generally along the southern edges towards Lake Marma during high rainfall events, or in circumstances where the urban stormwater network is overcapacity.

There has been no town-level assessments of flood risk for Murtoa and there is currently no flood mapping for the town within the Planning Scheme.

Further flood and stormwater investigations should be undertaken to confirm future flood risks.

BIODIVERSITY & TREE CANOPY

Murtoa is at the southern edge of the Yarrilinks Landcare enhanced vegetation link, which continues north through Warracknabeal, Brim and Beulah to Hopetoun. The link represents a significant biodiversity spine through the municipality.

The Barabool Flora and Fauna Reserve south of Murtoa is identified as one of the largest areas of intact native vegetation within the Yarrilinks area.

The NatureKit tool (Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action) identifies Lake Marma has a high habitat value and is likely to support a number of species. The wetland is classified as Riverine Chenopod Woodland, which is an endangered grassy woodland.

The Murtoa Racecourse and Recreation Reserve is also identified as having moderate to high conservation value.

There is generally good canopy tree cover within the private and public realms.

LAND USE COMPATIBILITY

The Township Zone has a direct interface with the Farming Zone and agricultural activity at most of its edges.

Council is aware of issues with the potential for spray drift from pesticides applied to crops in the urban extent of the town. This is particularly acknowledged at the southern boundary of the town, in proximity to Murtoa College.

There is a need to carefully manage this interface and investigate opportunities to minimise the spray drift, including through planting, and to avoid land use conflict.

OBJECTIVE 4: To protect community health and safety from natural hazards and land use conflicts.

Strategy 4.1: Ensure that development occurs in areas that are at lower risk from bushfire and flood hazard.

- Action 4.1.1: Undertake a town level flood study for Murtoa.
- Action 4.1.2: Ensure that development occurs in areas where bushfire risk can be managed and that appropriate bushfire protection measures are incorporated into development.

Strategy 4.2: Manage the potential for adverse amenity impacts from land use conflicts.

- Action 4.2.1: Investigate and implement measures to manage the adverse impacts of spray drift along the southern edge of the town.

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Lake Marma

3.5 MOVEMENT & TRANSPORT

ROAD NETWORK

The Wimmera Highway forms an important main east-west thoroughfare through Murtoa, and provides important connections to nearby towns, as well as facilitating freight movements. Lake Street and Marma Street form part of the Wimmera Highway alignment and serve a significant arterial road function.

The local road network predominantly forms a grid alignment and traffic volumes can be comfortably accommodated within the existing road network.

There are only two east-west connections between the town centre and land west of Lake Marma. Many of the roads west of Lake Marma are also unsealed. The sealing of these roads and other improvements to infrastructure will assist in allowing increased housing within the town.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Public transport connections are limited to once daily V-Line Coach Services (which provide connection between Melbourne and Adelaide), which depart from the corner of McDonald Street and Marma Street.

There are no passenger rail services and commuter bus services to nearby towns are not provided.

The lack of public transport results in a high level of car dependency, fewer economic opportunities and a lack of connection to nearby towns.

Improving access to public transport is critical to supporting the local community, particularly to ensure that residents are able to age in place and access a full range of services, including health care which is not provided within Murtoa.

WALKING & CYCLING

The eastern part of Murtoa (east of Lake Street) is generally well provided with pedestrian footpaths on at least one side of all streets. Within the western part of the town (generally west of Lake Street), footpaths are only provided on Breen Street. There is an opportunity to extend the provision of dedicated footpaths to roads in this location.

Recreational walking paths are also provided through Rabi Park and around the perimeter of Lake Marma.

The town's key open space, commercial and education nodes are dispersed and there is generally limited connection between these nodes. There is an opportunity to strengthen active transport connections, including through mid-block connections where feasible.

Lake Street, which forms part of the Wimmera Highway, is a wide road reserve and does not provide any form of signalised intersections or pedestrian crossing. Opportunities to support safer crossing of this road will provide improved connection between open space and the commercial core of the town.

OBJECTIVE 5: To provide a safe, accessible and integrated movement network within Murtoa.

Strategy 5.1: Facilitate safe, accessible and direct movement networks within the town.

- Action 5.1.1: Complete missing links in the pedestrian footpath network west of Lake Marma.
- Action 5.1.2: Investigate opportunities for funding to seal the road network west of Lake Marma.
- Action 5.1.3: Work with the Department of Transport and Planning to establish a direct and safe pedestrian crossing of the Wimmera Highway along Lake Street.
- Action 5.1.4: Provide wayfinding signage to support safe and efficient movement within the town.

Strategy 5.2 Strengthen active and public transport connections within Murtoa and to nearby towns.

- Action 5.2.1: Investigate the feasibility of providing off-road, mid-block pedestrian connections between the education precinct and McDonald Street.
- Action 5.2.2: Establish pedestrian crossings along Breen Street to support connection between Rabi Park and Lake Marma Reserve.
- Action 5.2.3: Advocate to the State Government for bus connections between Murtoa, Horsham and other towns.

3.6 OPEN SPACE & INFRASTRUCTURE

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

Murtoa has a range of active and passive open space and recreation facilities provided within the town.

Rabl Park and Lake Marma Public Park and Gardens form a significant open space spine through the town. These reserves include a range of infrastructure including multi-age playgrounds, barbecue, picnic facilities and public toilets. These facilities and open space are valued by the community.

The Murtoa Bowling Club, Recreation Reserve and Showgrounds provide active open space which are well utilised by local sporting clubs. These clubs are vital to community strengthening.

Council has developed master plans for the Murtoa Recreation Reserve and Rabl Park. These master plans recommend a range of improvements, which are important to maintaining the viability of these facilities for the community.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Murtoa has a range of education facilities, including the Murtoa College (Foundation – Year 12), and Bani Walup Early Learning Centre. These facilities serve an important role for the local community, as well as secondary education for Rupanyup and Minyip. The ongoing viability of the town's education facilities are important to the development of the southern towns of Yarriambiack more broadly.

Murtoa has a relatively limited range of health care facilities and services. In part, this is influenced by the town's proximity to Horsham. There is a limited hours General Practice medical centre, but no other significant healthcare facilities. There are significant distances involved in travelling for healthcare and the lack of public transport options

Expanded health and aged care infrastructure and services will be critical to support the local community. There is an identified need for aged care and home services, as well as increased demand for general practitioners, specialists and allied health services.

SERVICE INFRASTRUCTURE

Murtoa is provided with reticulated water, sewerage, electricity and telecommunications services.

Areas of Murtoa west of Lake Marma and Rabl Park have limited provision of reticulated sewer, water and in some cases electricity. Council and GWMWater have investigated opportunities to expand reticulated services to these areas and the provision of infrastructure is unfunded. The lack of infrastructure in this part of the town is the most significant constraint to its development and further growth of the town.

Murtoa is within the mobile coverage areas of major telecommunications providers and is connected to the National Broadband Network by fixed wireless technology. The Council Plan includes an action to advocate for equitable internet access and there are opportunities to improve broadband technology provision.

OBJECTIVE 5: To provide and maintain viable and sustainable health care, and other services to support Murtoa and the surrounding community.

Strategy 6.1: Deliver viable health care and education services to support the local community.

- Action 6.1.1: Investigate future service needs for health and aged care services.
- Action 6.1.2: Advocate for increased health care services and facilities within Murtoa.

Strategy 6.2: Deliver infrastructure and services to all land within Murtoa.

- Action 6.2.1: Investigate the feasibility of providing water, wastewater and electricity services to land west of Lake Marma that is currently not serviced.
- Action 6.2.2: Advocate for funding to deliver infrastructure to unserved areas of the town.
- Action 6.2.3: Advocate for the provision of fibre to the premises NBN technology to support equitable digital access in the Shire.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

The Murtoa Structure Plan will be implemented through a range of statutory and non-statutory measures to ensure that the vision, objectives, strategies and actions are achieved.

The full range of implementation measures are set out in the implementation plan overleaf.

STATUTORY IMPLEMENTATION

Statutory implementation of the Structure Plan will involve the preparation of planning scheme amendments to implement the relevant land use planning directions.

Some of the statutory implementation measures identified in this Structure Plan (such as providing improved policy direction, implementing the findings of the heritage review and identifying the settlement boundary) can be implemented in the immediate term.

Other measures, such as implementing flood provisions and rezoning land to the Commercial 1 Zone within the commercial core of the town, will require further strategic work before implementation.

The rezoning of McDonald Street to the Commercial 1 Zone will require further economic analysis to consider the impact on existing and future commercial activity.

NON-STATUTORY IMPLEMENTATION

In addition to the statutory implementation, the Structure Plan also identifies a range of actions that will be implemented outside of the planning scheme.

These measures require further investigation, funding and partnership with other stakeholders, including the Victorian State Government, infrastructure and utility service providers and other non-government bodies.

MONITORING & REVIEW

This Structure Plan is intended to guide the development of Murtoa towards 2044.

Council should review the Structure Plan every five (5) years to audit the progress of implementation of each action and to determine if any changes in the physical, economic or policy context affecting the community require a change in policy direction.

This review cycle will also ensure that the Structure Plan remains relevant and consistent with the Council Plan and Council's strategic priorities.

4. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Action #	Action	Statutory / Non-statutory	Council Role	Priority	Stakeholders
Housing					
1.1.1	Amend local policy to facilitate smaller lots and encourage compact dwelling sizes to increase supply of smaller format housing for key workers and an ageing population in proximity of McDonald Street.	Statutory	Implement (via policy in planning scheme)	Medium	Department of Transport and Planning.
1.1.2	Advocate for and support the provision of specialised aged care accommodation, including retirement villages and residential aged care facilities.	Non-statutory	Advocate	High	Landowners, Department of Health, Department of Transport and Planning.
1.1.3	Advocate for the provision of affordable rental accommodation to support key workers.	Non-statutory	Advocate	High	Landowners, Department of Transport and Planning.
1.2.1	Develop and implement built form objectives and strategies into the Planning Scheme to guide housing design.	Statutory	Investigate and implement	Low	Department of Transport and Planning.
Economic Development					
2.1.1	Amend local policy to identify support for a diverse range of commercial, retail and service uses within McDonald Street.	Statutory	Implement (via policy in planning scheme)	Medium	Department of Transport and Planning.
2.1.2	Investigate rezoning McDonald Street between Degenhardt Street and Marma Street to the Commercial 1 Zone.	Statutory	Investigate and Implement	Low	Department of Transport and Planning, Murtoa Progress Association, Landowners.
2.1.3	Amend local policy to provide strategies that encourage good design along McDonald Street.	Statutory	Investigate and Implement	Low	Department of Transport and Planning, Murtoa Progress Association, Landowners.

Action #	Action	Statutory / Non-statutory	Council Role	Priority	Partners
Economic Development (continued)					
2.1.4	Work with the Murtoa Progress Association to support the revitalisation of McDonald Street.	Non-statutory	Investigate	High	Murtoa Progress Association, Landowners.
2.2.1	Amend local policy to facilitate the provision of diverse tourism accommodation to support overnight tourism stays.	Statutory	Implement (via a planning scheme amendment)	Medium	Landowners, Department of Transport and Planning, Invest Victoria, Visit Victoria.
2.2.2	Work with State Government and tourism operators to strengthen Murtoa's event tourism, including the Big Weekend.	Non-statutory	Partner	High	Invest Victoria, Visit Victoria, Landowners, Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions.
2.3.1	Monitor industrial land supply in the medium term to determine whether further industrial land is required.	Statutory	Monitor	Low	Landowners. Department of Transport and Planning. Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions.
Built Environment & Heritage					
3.1.1	Implement the findings of the Heritage Study Review into the planning scheme.	Statutory	Implement (via a planning scheme amendment)	Medium	Department of Transport and Planning.
3.1.2	Introduce local policy guidance to support appropriate decision-making for sites of heritage significance.	Statutory	Implement (via a planning scheme amendment)	Medium	Department of Transport and Planning.
3.2.1	Development and implement local policy guidance to support appropriate decision-making in relation to neighbourhood character.	Statutory	Investigate and Implement	Low	Department of Transport and Planning, Landowners.

Action #	Action	Statutory / Non-Statutory	Council Role	Priority	Partners
Built Environment & Heritage (continued)					
3.3.1	Undertake planting and landscaping within the public realm along the eastern gateway to improve the visual presentation of the entrance to the town.	Non-statutory	Deliver	Low	Landowners.
Landscape & Environment					
4.1.1	Undertake a town level flood study for Murtoa.	Statutory	Investigate and Implement	Medium	Wimmera Catchment Management Authority.
4.1.2	Ensure that development occurs in areas where bushfire risk can be managed and that appropriate bushfire protection measures are incorporated into development.	Statutory	Implement	High	Country Fire Authority.
4.2.1	Investigate and implement measures to manage the adverse impacts of spray drift along the southern edge of the town.	Statutory	Investigate and Implement	Low	Landowners.
Movement & Transport					
5.1.1	Complete missing links in the pedestrian footpath network west of Lake Marma.	Non-statutory	Deliver	Medium	



Action #	Action	Statutory / Non-statutory	Council Role	Priority	Partners
Movement & Transport (continued)					
5.1.2	Investigate opportunities for funding to seal the road network west of Lake Marma.	Non-statutory	Advocate and Deliver	Medium	Department of Transport and Planning.
5.1.3	Work with the Department of Transport and Planning to establish a direct and safe pedestrian crossing of the Wimmera Highway along Lake Street.	Non-statutory	Partner	Low	Regional Roads Victoria.
5.1.4	Provide wayfinding signage to support safe and efficient movement within the town.	Non-statutory	Deliver	Low	
5.2.1	Investigate the feasibility of providing off-road, mid-block pedestrian connections between the education precinct and McDonald Street.	Non-statutory	Investigate & Implement	Low	Landowners. Murtoa Progress Association.
5.2.2	Establish pedestrian crossings along Breen Street to support connection between Rabl Park and Lake Marma Reserve.	Non-statutory	Deliver	Medium	
5.2.3	Advocate to the State Government for bus connections between Murtoa, Horsham and other towns.	Non-statutory	Advocate	High	Department of Transport and Planning.
Open Space & Infrastructure					
6.1.1	Investigate future service needs for health and aged care services.	Non-statutory	Investigate	High	Department of Health, Community.
6.1.2	Advocate for increased health care services and facilities within Murtoa.	Non-statutory	Advocate	High	Department of Health, Community.

Action #	Action	Statutory / Non-statutory	Council Role	Priority	Partners
Open Space & Infrastructure (continued)					
6.2.1	Investigate the feasibility of providing water, wastewater and electricity services to land west of Lake Marma that is currently not serviced.	Non-statutory	Investigate & Partner	High	GWM Water, Powercor.
6.2.2	Advocate for funding to deliver infrastructure to unserved areas of the town.	Non-statutory	Advocate & Partner	High	GWM Water, Powercor.
6.2.3	Advocate for the provision of fibre to the premises NBN technology to support equitable digital access in the Shire.	Non-statutory	Advocate	Medium	NBNCo, Australian Federal Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sports and the Arts.

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5. DRAFT PLANNING SCHEME CHANGES

MUNICIPAL PLANNING STRATEGY & THE PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The vision, objectives and strategies of the Structure Plan will be embedded into local policies within the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and the Planning Policy Framework (PPF) of the Planning Scheme.

This will include the following:

- **Clause 02.03-1 Settlement** to update the role of Murtoa to reflect the vision outlined within the Structure Plan and align the role of the town with designations in Clause 11.01-1R and Plan for Victoria.
- **Clause 11.01-1L-02 Murtoa** to introduce the key land use and development planning objectives and strategies outlined within the Structure Plan, as well as the Strategic Framework Plan outlined in the Structure Plan.
- **Clause 15.03-1L Heritage conservation in Yarriambiack** to introduce local policy guidance to support decision making on sites of heritage significance.
- **Clause 16.01-1L Medium density housing – Yarriambiack** to update policy direction for preferred locations for medium density housing within Murtoa.
- **Clause 17.04-1L Tourism in Yarriambiack** to introduce directions to support the provision of tourism accommodation within Murtoa.

ZONES & OVERLAYS

The actions of the Structure Plan also recommend changes to the zones and overlays that apply within Murtoa, as follows:

- **Investigation of the rezoning of part of McDonald Street north of Marma Street to the Commercial 1 Zone.**
- **Applying the Heritage Overlay to land identified in the Heritage Study Review and correcting the mapped extents of the overlay.**

OPERATIONAL PROVISIONS

The implementation of the Structure Plan can also be achieved through the following changes to the operational provisions of the planning scheme:

This will include the following:

- Introducing the Murtoa Structure Plan as a background document in the schedule to **Clause 72.08 Background Documents.**
- Identifying further strategic work in the schedule to **Clause 74.02 Further Strategic Work.**

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Yarriambiack
SHIRE COUNCIL