Tomkinson

towongshire

DRAFT **BELLBRIDGE STRUCTURE PLAN**

EMERGING OPTIONS PAPER

2024 - 2044

CONTENTS

VERSION	DATE	NOTES	REVIEW
V1 DRAFT	March 2024		AT
V2 DRAFT	March 2024	Update chapters, insert mapping, and spelling.	KX
V3 FINAL	April 2024		

01 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 WHAT IS THE BELLBRIDGE STRUCTURE PLAN?

The structure plan will set a 20-year vision to guide the future planning of the township and surrounds.

Structure plans are prepared with the involvement of the local community, Towong Shire Council, government agencies, other relevant stakeholders and technical experts.

A structure plan sets appropriate directions and opportunities for change that ensures an area will be environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. Structure plans include:

- A clear vision for the area.
- Plans to guide future land uses and associated infrastructure provision.
- Locations of community hubs and amenity (sport facilities, schools, health centres, kindergartens etc).
- Plans to grow, maintain or improve local town centres.
- Movement and access which cover traffic, car parking, walking, cycling, public transport, and freight transport routes.
- Plans to enhance open space, town entrances, public gathering spaces, parks and gardens.
- Ways to attract and develop stronger economic growth, business and tourism development.
- Protection and enhancement of key landscape and heritage assets.
- The structure plan does not directly change zoning or overlays, it merely signals for future change.

1.2 WHY PREPARE A STRUCTURE PLAN FOR BELLBRIDGE?

Bellbridge is located 12km from the centre of the Albury and 15km from the centre of Wodonga. The continued growth of these regional cities on either side of the Victorian and NSW border will place considerable population pressures on Bellbridge which is geographically positioned as a satellite area of both towns. The Hume Regional Growth Plan 2014 identifies Wodonga as a regional city and promotes the residential growth of this area, which by extension will affect the future of Bellbridge due to its proximity to this urban centre.

The structure plan will help identify what type of changes are required to strategically position Bellbridge in the region over the next 20 years.

The structure plan will build on Bellbridge's existing strengths and address challenges to facilitate positive change. The structure plan will manage the future development of the town, meeting the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.

Recommendations and actions in a structure plan will be implemented by many stakeholders over short, medium, and long-term time frames.

1.3 WHAT IS THE EMERGING OPTIONS PAPER?

Following the completion of the Issues + Opportunities Paper, Agency, Stakeholder and Community Engagement and the Our Towns - Towards 2030, the Emerging Options Paper has been developed to consolidate findings and help guide and inform a Structure Plan for Bellbridge.

The identified Emerging Options within this paper will inform the Bellbridge Structure Plan by outlining and clarifying ideas and goals for future changes

PART 1 - OVERVIEW & KEY ISSUES

Part 1 of this document summarises the analysis that has occurred to date in relation to the draft Bellbridge Structure Plan 2024 - 2044.

It provides an overview of the outcomes of the targeted consultation process and outlines the key options, ideas, principles and aspirations that have been considered for Bellbridge now and into the future.

The Structure Plan is being prepared to guide future planning, development and infrastructure provision to guide future development to 2044.

PART 2 - PILLARS PRINCIPLES & OBJECTIVES

Part 2 puts forward the likely key themes Pillars, that will inform the draft Structure Plan. This part of the document has been structured to provide a potential approach concerning each of the objectives of the Structure Plan.

PART 3 – EMERGING OPTIONS & KEY QUESTIONS

Part 3 provides details of the potential settlement boundaries, key investigation areas and future land use changes and opportunities.

1.4 CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

CULTURAL HERITAGE + LANDSCAPE

The purpose of the Managing Cultural Landscapes Project (The Study) is to inform the Emerging Options Paper by understanding cultural landscapes in Towong Shire and identify the knowledge gaps that are present regarding best practice planning policy.

The Managing Cultural Landscapes project acknowledges the current gap that exists in contemporary planning practice in Victoria around culturally sensitive landscapes. Through this body of work, we aim to identify and capture significant cultural landscapes within the structure plan areas (see Figure 1 below) and enshrine these in best practice planning policy and policy guidance, to be recognised now and into the future. The relationship between cultural and settler landscapes will also be considered.

The focus of The Study is:

- To identify the broad cultural values of proposed change areas relating to the Bellbridge Structure Plan.

- For Council, Traditional Owner, Heritage groups and relevant stakeholders to work together to improve the ways in which cultural values are identified and cultural heritage management occurs within planning

- To ensure that interested Aboriginal parties are included within the planning process for Bellbridge that affect and impact Country

- To present cultural values that occur in and around the identified study areas with a particular focus on the identified change areas

- To recognise the importance of planned township expansion both as a way of ensuring that development meets demand and importantly, ensuring that existing local values are minimally impacted by such growth

- To examine and include information and data not traditionally included in cultural heritage surveys, such as important travel routes, identification of Food and Fibre resources, lookouts / peaks etc.

- To identify, conserve and enhance landscape characteristics and values for chosen growth areas

- To protect and manage highly sensitive landscapes

- To protect important vista and view corridors

- To enhance views and provide additional opportunities for the enjoyment of the views by the public

- To consider bushfire within the context of the proposed changes area and town boundaries.

Towong Shire's landscapes and values have long been recognised as integral to the area's distinguishing features and key strengths.

From spectacular natural backdrops of National Parks and other protected lands as well as the complex patchwork of agriculture, rural landscapes, bushland, rivers, towns and communities. Both settler culture and traditional owner culture can be seen and experienced across the Shire.

This document provides an analysis and mapping of the culturally valued landscapes, used to inform the Emerging Options Papers associated with the Corryong, Tallangatta and Bellbridge Structure Plans.

Through a landscape lens, the document will consider:

- What makes the landscapes of Towong different or unique?

- Is a landscape of cultural value for contemporary reasons, settler heritage or aboriginal cultural value, or a combination?

- Are they worthy of protection? Is change acceptable?

- What are the emerging pressures and opportunities for scenic and cultural landscapes?

- What opportunities are there to protect and enhance culturally important landscapes through a structure planning process?
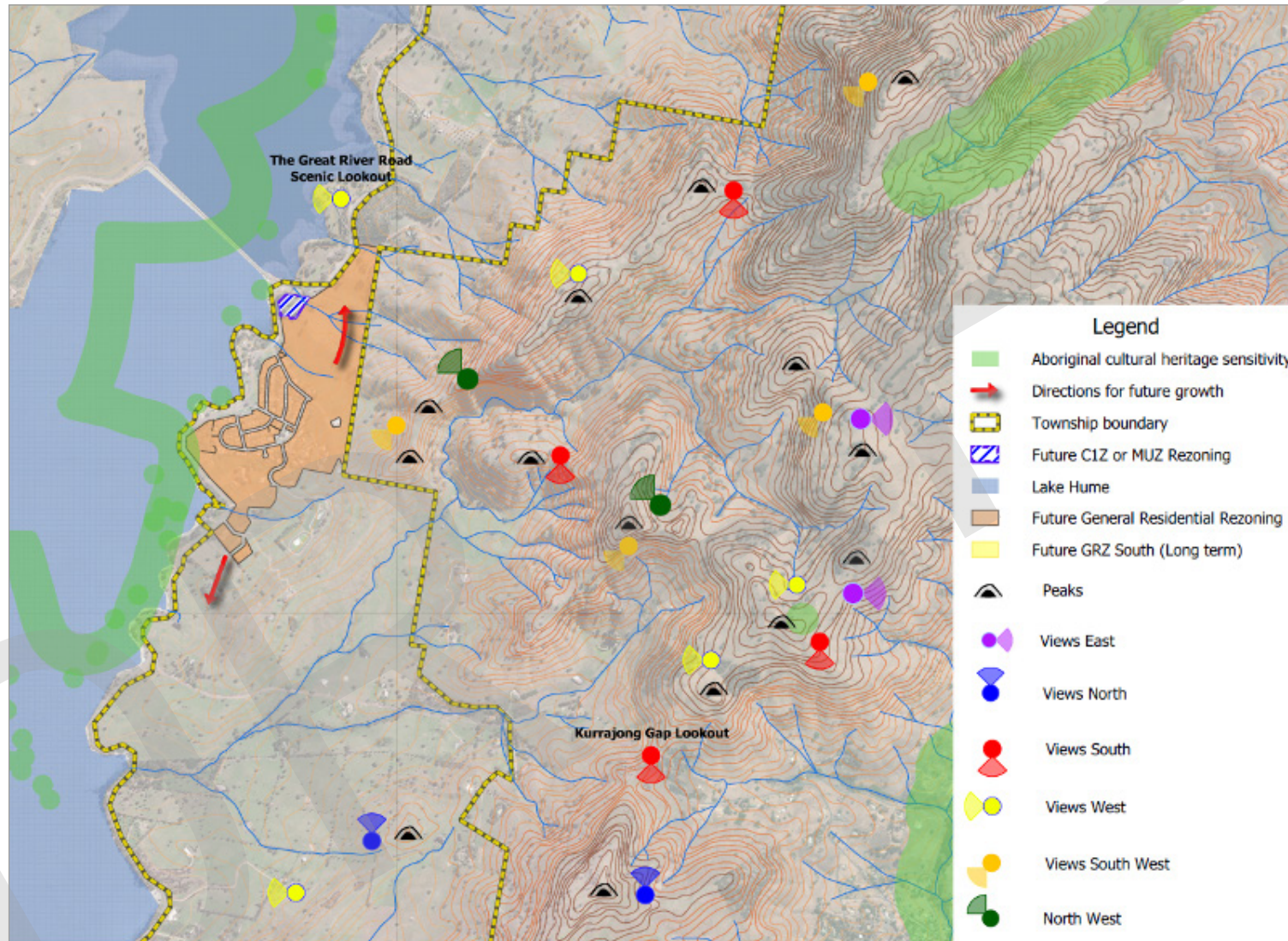
Figure 1: Bellbridge Cultural Landscape Plan. Tomkinson 2024.

02 - INTRODUCTION TO BELLBRIDGE

Bellbridge is the westernmost township in Towong Shire, located approximately 12km east of Albury and Wodonga. Characterised by the spectacular surrounding landscape and a compact settlement shape defined by the steep topography to the east and the shore of Lake Hume to the west, the town has scope to grow its population and improve its role and function as a satellite township.
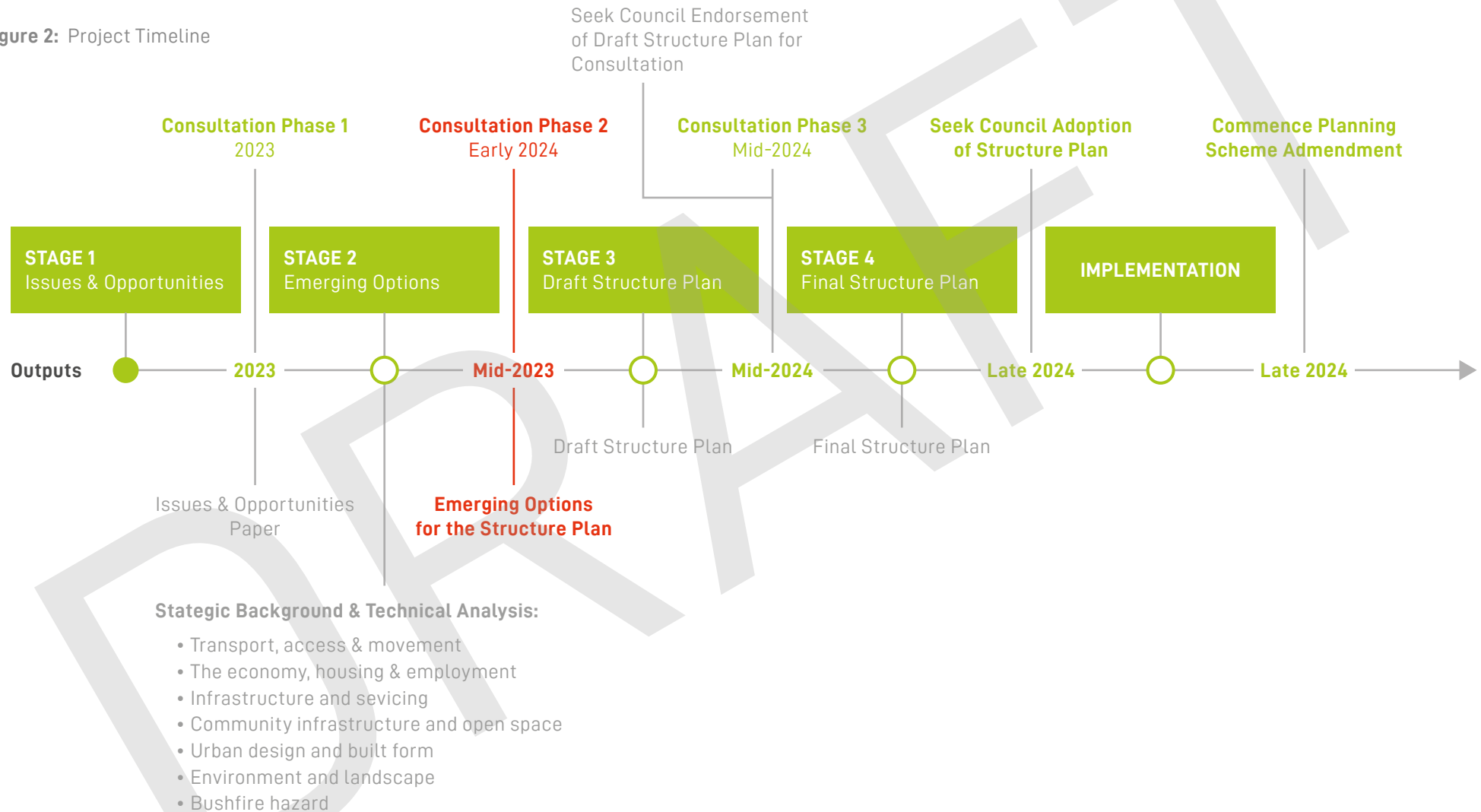
2.1 STRUCTURE PLAN OBJECTIVES

1. Define a vision

2. Identify a settlement boundary

3. Identify opportunities for growth and supporting physical and social infrastructure

4. Opportunity to review local planning policy

5. Provide guidance and a level of certainty for future planning, development and investment into the township.

6. Identify constraints and plan appropriately with respect to bushfire hazards, waterways, topography and climate change.

2.2 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

There will be several key stages to the Bellbridge Structure Plan which are summarised in Figure 1. A consultation strategy was developed and will continue to evolve over the course of the Structure Plan process. This will ensure the wider community and key stakeholders are able to engage and contribute to the Structure Plan from beginning to end – helping to shape the ultimate plan and outcome for Bellbridge.

Figure 2: Project Timeline

Seek Council Endorsement
of Draft Structure Plan for
Consultation

Consultation Phase 1
2023

Consultation Phase 2
Early 2024

Consultation Phase 3
Mid-2024

**Seek Council Adoption
of Structure Plan**

**Commence Planning
Scheme Admendment**

| STAGE 1 Issues & Opportunities | STAGE 2 Emerging Options | STAGE 3 Draft Structure Plan | STAGE 4 Final Structure Plan | IMPLEMENTATION |

Outputs ● ── **2023** ──○── **Mid-2023** ──○── **Mid-2024** ──○── **Late 2024** ──○── **Late 2024** →

Draft Structure Plan

Final Structure Plan

Issues & Opportunities
Paper

**Emerging Options
for the Structure Plan**

Stategic Background & Technical Analysis:

• Transport, access & movement
• The economy, housing & employment
• Infrastructure and sevicing
• Community infrastructure and open space
• Urban design and built form
• Environment and landscape
• Bushfire hazard

2.3 BELLBRIDGE TOWNSHIP CONTEXT

EXISTING SETTLEMENT AREA

The township is located on the eastern shore of Lake Hume and is contained by steep topography to the west of the town with the urban area extending to the lakeside, and Lake Road wrapping around the shoreline. The urban area of the township consists primarily of General Residential Zone style allotments with single and double-story detached dwellings that have west-facing views across Lake Hume. An area of Low Density Residential Zone is located on the south side of the township with the wastewater treatment facility located uphill to the east.

There is no defined town centre and currently, there is no commercial activity within the township.

An established park is located near the centre of Bellbridge on Craig Drive which also contains two (2) tennis courts and an early learning childhood centre that adjoins the park.

MOVEMENT NETWORK

Bellbridge is connected to NSW on the opposite side of Lake Hume via the Heritage listed Bethanga Bridge. The bridge is a two (2) lane roadway that has limited capacity to carry heavy vehicles with no active transport links.

The drive from Bellbridge to the centre of Albury is approximately 15 minutes, which cements Bellbridge as a satellite township to the greater urban areas of both Albury and Wodonga. This area is considered Peri-Urban Towong (see Figure 3 below).

The internal street network of Bellbridge contains sealed roads with curb and channel. No pedestrian footpath network is present outside of the waterfront reserve. A gravel shared path extends along the waterfront that connects the boat shed peninsula to the Kurrajong Gap Road to the south of the township.

TOPOGRAPHY

Bellbridge is located on the Bethanga peninsula which is characterised by steep terrain rising from 200AHD at the lake edge to over 550AHD to top of the ridge west of the township.

The urban layout of Bellbridge is built into the hillside and is defined by the local topography and bound by the shores of Lake Hume, presenting a challenging geography for future growth.

2.4 DEMOGRAPHICS, CULTURAL IDENTITY AND EMPLOYMENT

The 2021 Australian Census provides an extensive set of data on the Bellbridge Suburb And Localities (SAL) area 20196 as described in the Bellbridge Issues & Opportunities Paper 2024:

- *The 2021 population of greater Bellbridge stood at 393 people.*

- *The majority of the town's population were born in Australia at 84.7%, with the next largest demographics from England and the Places not stated at around 5% for each.*

- *47.6% of the Bellbridge population is over 55 with the median age of persons at 50.*

- *Only 3 people of the Bellbridge community identifies as Aboriginal decent. There are no residents of Torres Strait Island descent.*

- *The construction industry employs 15.6% of Bellbridge's working population while 21.3% of those employed work in the Health Care and Social Assistance sector, reflective of the proximity to the growing city of Albury and the older demographic profile of the township respectively.*

- *Bellbridge contains a total of 152 households, with 24.3% of people living alone and 36.1% in a two (2) person household. The number of three (3) or more person households represents 42.1% of all households, representing a large portion of families within the township with children under the age of 19.*

- *Median personal income is $767 a week while the median household income is $1,413 a week.*

- *Median mortgage repayment is $1,500 a month and the median rent is $308 a week*

- *Higher proportion of population own their dwelling outright or with a mortgage at 82.2%.*

When compared to Australia, key characteristics of the Bellbridge community include:

- *Low Cultural diversity (a large number of Australian born residents with low numbers of Aboriginal or Torres Straight Island peoples);*

- *Key employment industries reflect typical employment generators for townships (a higher proportion of the employed population working in primary production, health, retail and education);*

- *Higher proportion of young families (including one parent family households) and a higher proportion of pre-retirees and retirees; and*

- *Higher proportion of population over 55 years of age*

- *Lower proportion of people aged 18-34*

2.5 HOW HAVE WE COMMUNICATED TO DATE?

A Government agency workshop was undertaken on the 6th March 2024 to further discuss the key Pillars and proposed direction of the Structure Plan.

Feedback from this meeting has been considered and where relevant incorporated into this Emerging Options Paper.
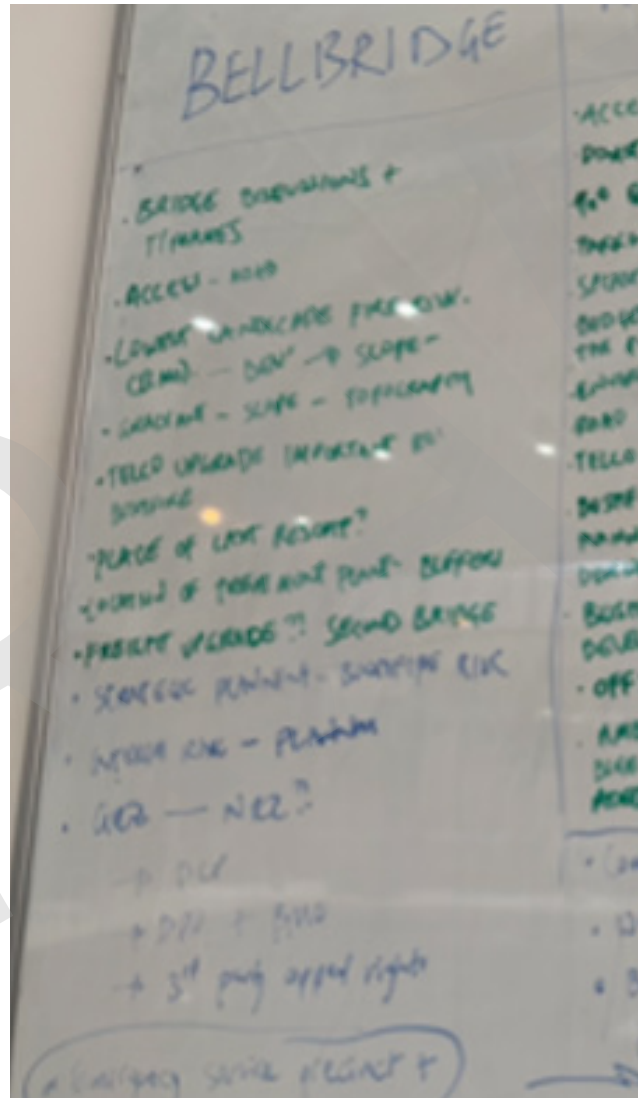
Facilitated by Clarke Hopkins Clarke, 'Our Towns - Towards 20230' is a detailed Placemaking project that is occurring concurrently with the Bellbridge Structure Plan process. The outcomes of the Place Making project and the associated extensive community consultation have informed the Pillars of the Structure Plan and informed the Issue + Opportunities and Emerging Options Papers.

Placemaking conversations were carried out in two (2) rounds of community consultation in Bellbridge, Corryong and Tallangatta, in addition to Mitta Mitta and Bethanga. The feedback and outcomes from this work have helped create the Key Pillars that will be the foundation for the Bellbridge Structure Plan.

Key Pillars:

- Housing
- Transport & Access
- Critical Infrastructure & Utilities
- Character, Culture & Identity
- Environment
- Recreation & Open Space
- Community Infrastructure, Local Services & Education

The Placemaking community consultation provided the following Big Ideas and associated themes for Bellbridge

BIG IDEA	THEME
Civic precinct & town centre to strengthen the lakeside community	- Create a town centre/ village heart. - Improve health & education services & facilities. - Improve transport, access & streets.
Gateway to Bethanga Peninsula & tourist destination	- Improve visitor experience - Leverage events - Environmental improvements.
Increase housing supply while retaining the small-town feel	- Increase housing supply. - Ensure long-term resilience.

Additionally, a community conversation was held at the Bellbridge Boathouse on the 19th March 2024. The session was held for four (4) hours and over 50 people attended. General feedback can be summarised as follows:

- Broad support for modest change
- A general view that a community hub or heart was needed for the town

- Improvements required to footpaths and roads in terms of safety and amenity
- Bridge access improvements
- Urban amenity improvements
- Celebrations of the 'village' needs to be expressed in future planning policy
- Acknowledgement that infrastructure provision/ constraints is a major impediment for the town
- Acknowledgement that a modest level commercial option should be afforded to the town

The considerations of local residents listed here will help inform and develop the emerging options in this paper and content of the final Structure Plan.
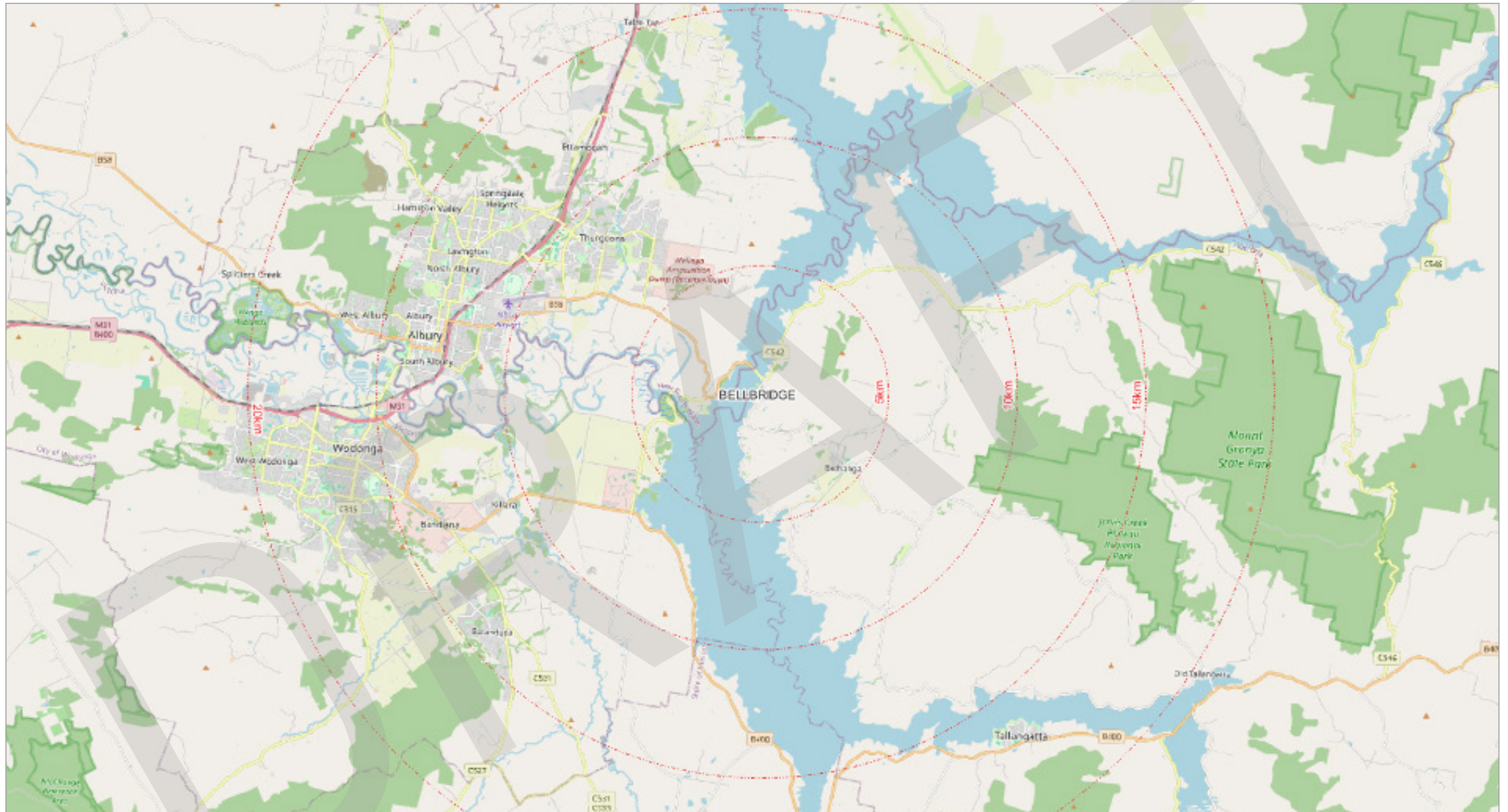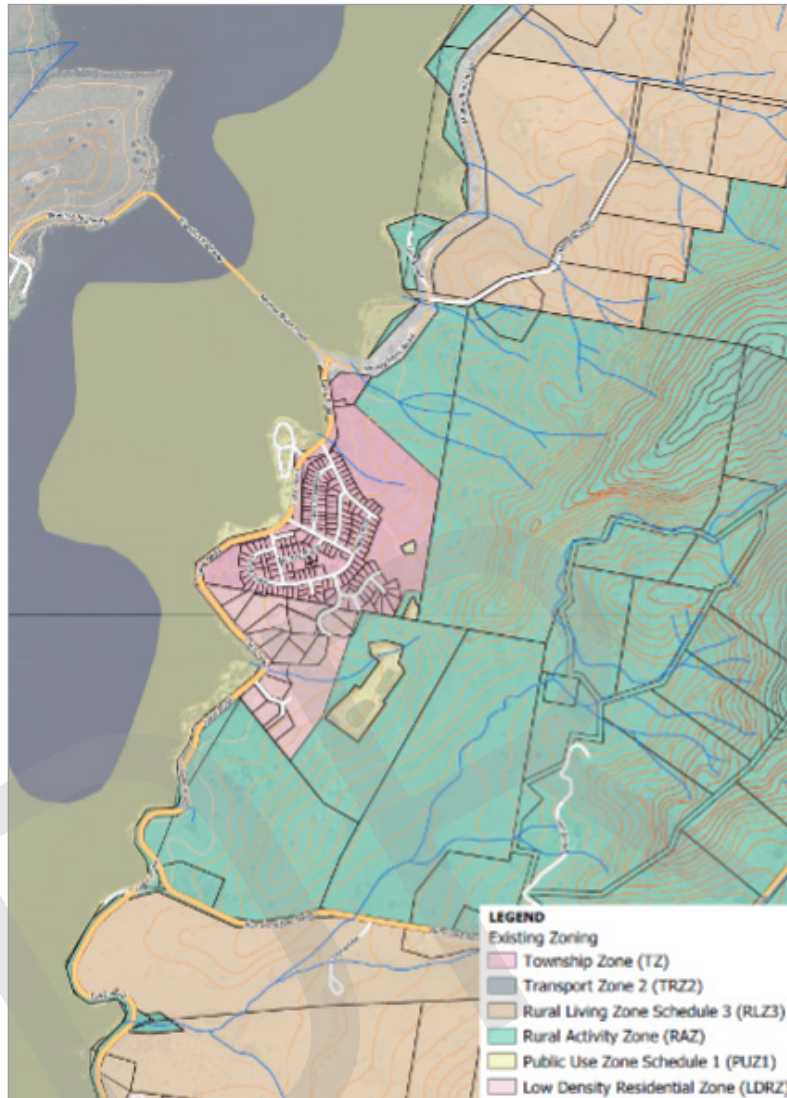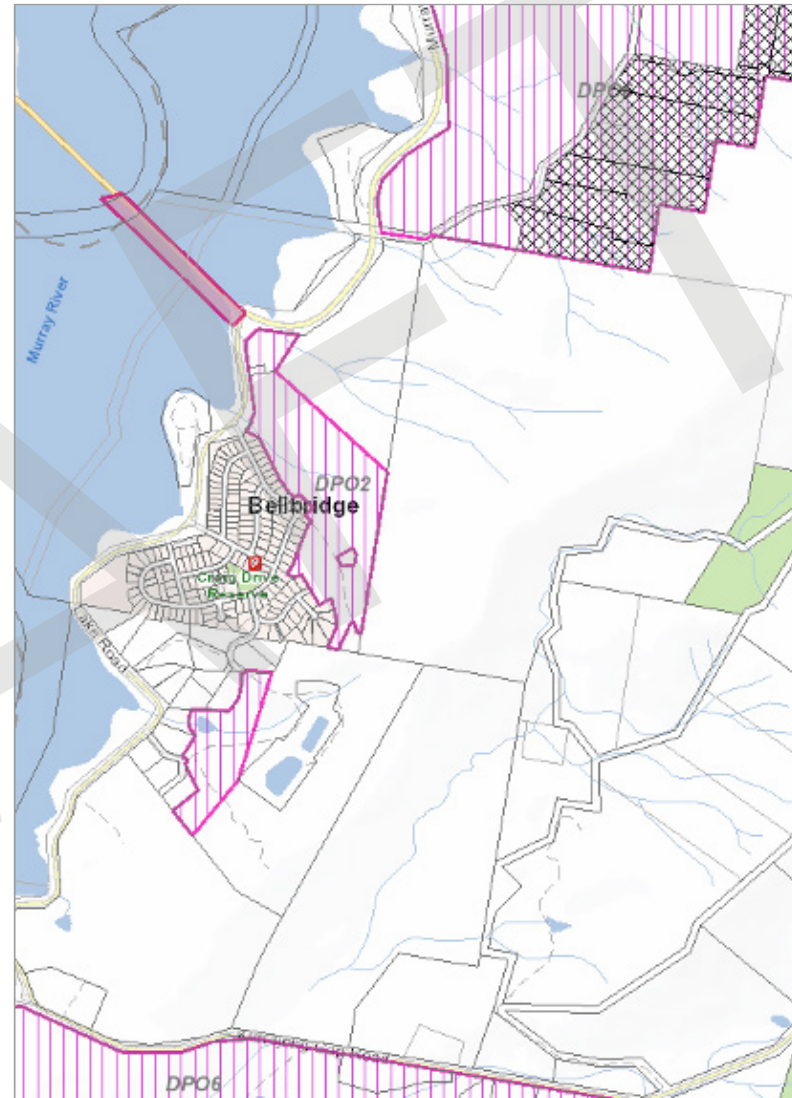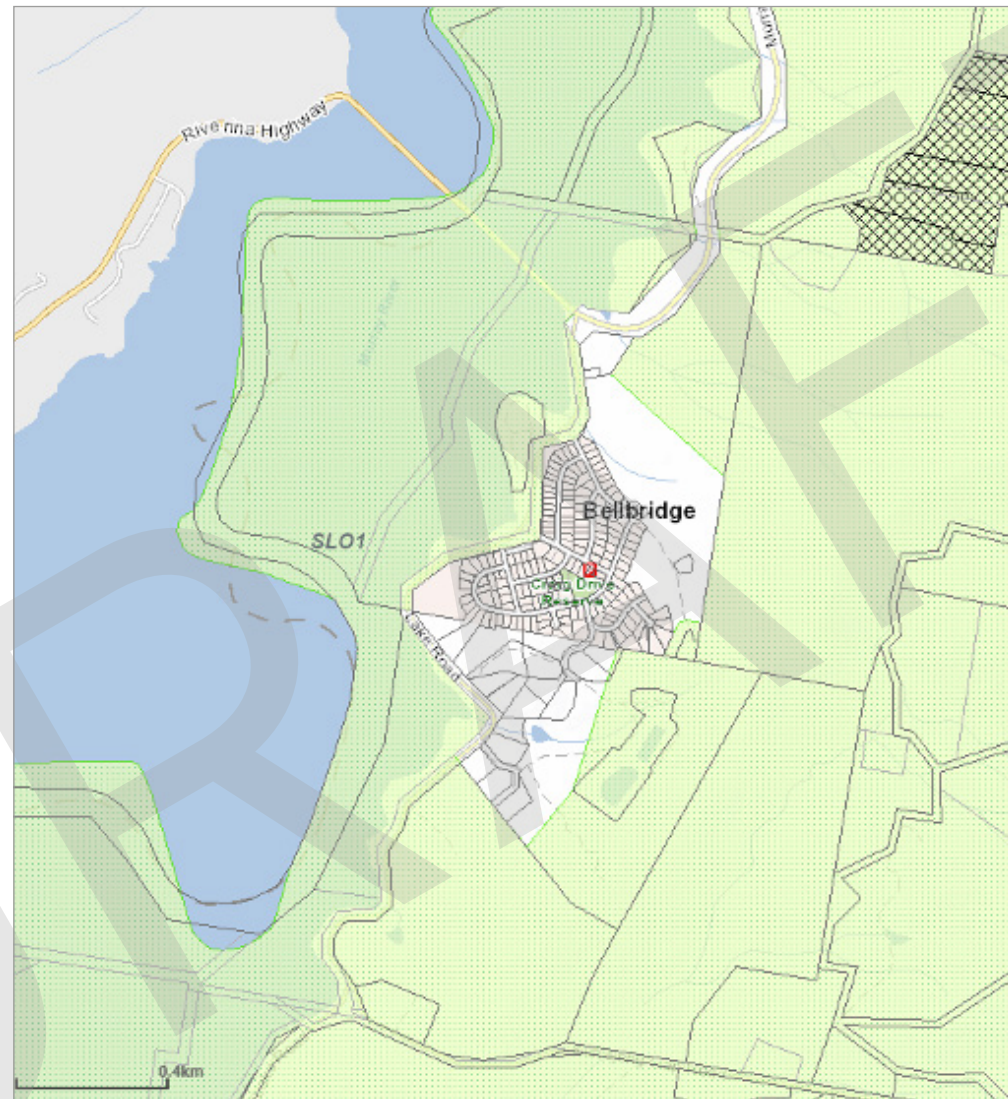
Figure 3: Bellbridge and surrounding area. Tomkinson 2024

LEGEND
Existing Zoning
- Township Zone (TZ)
- Transport Zone 2 (TRZ2)
- Rural Living Zone Schedule 3 (RLZ3)
- Rural Activity Zone (RAZ)
- Public Use Zone Schedule 1 (PUZ1)
- Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ)

Figure 4: Bellbridge and the surrounding area showing existing zones and topography. Tomkinson 2024.

Figure 5: Bellbridge and the surrounding area showing the Development Plan Overlay Schedule 2 and Heritage Overlay. Vicplan 2024.

Figure 6: Bellbridge and the surrounding area showing the location of the Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule 1. Vicplan 2024.
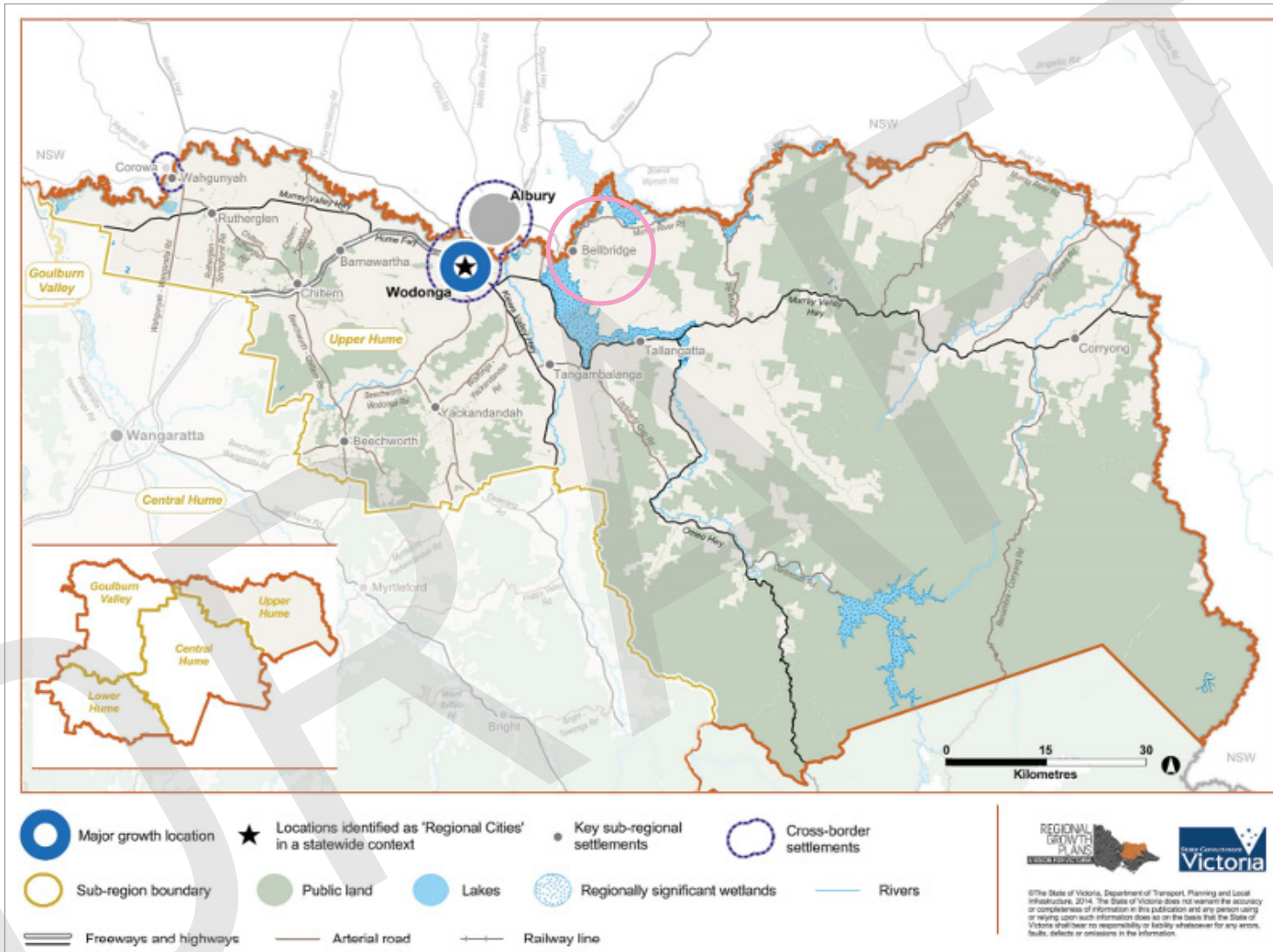
Figure 7: Hume Regional Growth Plan map of Upper Hume Region. Pink circle denotes subject area. Hume Regional Growth Plan 2014 page 53.

2.6 KEY ISSUES

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Bellbridge is located within proximity to the 'Major Growth Location' of Wodonga as shown in the Hume Regional Growth Plan (Figure 3 above). This proximity leads to expected growth pressures in Bellbridge as a satellite town to this major centre.

Outlined in the Towong Planning Scheme, Clause 02.03-1 Settlement – Bellbridge highlights key issues to *'include the limitation on southward growth of the town because of the Low-Density Residential Zone (LDRZ) in this area and the lack of capacity within the existing sewerage treatment facility to cater for the anticipated town growth.'*

Clause 11.01-1L-01 of the Towong Planning Scheme lays out the current strategies for Bellbridge based upon the previous Structure Plan, which has been removed from the Towong Planning Scheme as part of the C37 Planning Scheme Amendment in December 2022. The strategies listed below remain in the Towong Planning Scheme:

Limit residential development to land between Lake Road, Kurrajong Gap Road, Trewalla's Road, and the steep slopes that exist above the 230-250 AHD level east of the town.

Support use and development that improves the entrance to the town by integrating it with Bethanga Bridge as to providing a greater sense of arrival.

Facilitate the following rezoning of land:

- *Existing residential areas in the Township Zone and Low-Density Residential Zone to General Residential Zone.*

- *The central recreation and civic area at Craig Drive from Township Zone to Public Park and Recreation Zone.*

Encourage commercial use and development in high exposure locations that are readily accessible by facilitating the following rezoning of land:

- *Lot 149 LP111426 (Lake Road – Craig Drive)*

- *Lot 1 TP131930 (current motel site Murray River Road-Lake Road)*

- *Part Lot 2 TP879812 (current boat club site Lake Road)*

Encourage improved recreation opportunities, particularly those that provide integration with Lake Hume.

Connect all development to the town's water, sewerage and stormwater reticulated or drainage infrastructure.

Avoid adverse impacts from residual odour emissions of the wastewater treatment facility by providing necessary separation distances from the facility to any sensitive use and development.

As part of the Struture Planning process, the existing strategies listed above will be updated and replaced by new strategies and planning policies that reflect the outcomes illustrated in the new township Structure Plans.

Clause 02.03-6 Housing lists the strategic directions below that pertain to housing in urban and rural areas of the municipality.

Strategic directions:

- Facilitate an increase in diversity of housing sizes and types to meet the needs of the community.

- Encourage additional residential and rural living on the periphery of existing townships and settlements and close to urban facilities and services.

- Formalise existing rural living areas in western Towong Shire through rezoning.

The relevant zoning and overlays affecting the Bellbridge township and surrounds which are illustrated in Figures 4, 5 & 6 above.

HOUSING

The demographics of Bellbridge reflect conditions where the existing housing stock may not be fit for purpose in the long term for those wanting to age in place and / or accomodate the trend towards a shrinking household sizes that is present in the recent 2021 ABS Cenus data.

The prevalence of three (3) bedroom, detached dwellings results in a lack of dwelling diversity for the township.

The lack of available housing supply also influences market conditions of Bellbridge, presenting a greater

barrier to entry into the housing market due to the restricting supply increasing house prices. These factors mean that the median house is priced well above the Towong Shire median house price.

TOURISM AND ECONOMY

The limited commercial activity and lack of appropriate zoned land and dedicated spaces for commercial buildings in the township limits the ability of the town to attract and build on the tourism opportunities that Lake Hume presents. There is limited lake front activation and accommodation within the township to allow for ongoing tourism. The township relies heavily on commuting to the commercial and employment centres provided by the Albury and Wodonga economy.

This creates an overreliance on the connection to these urban centres. Other factors such as geography, infrastructure and lack of appropriately zoned land all act to stifle tourism and economic opportunities in the town.

TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

Issues that relate to transport and access primarily stem from the reliance on private motor vehicles for residents in Bellbridge to commute to nearby Albury and Wodonga via the Bethanga Bridge. There is limited public transport access and the Bridge itself does not provide active transport linkages. The capacity of the Bridge is limited in terms of heavy vehicle traffic and is unable to be upgraded due to its heritage status.

The internal street layout of Bellbridge also does not contain any footpaths for internal passive pedestrian linkages.

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES

The future development of Bellbridge is constrained by the size and capacity of the existing wastewater treatment facility located above the town to the west. The location of this facility also requires appropriate setback buffers to ensure there is no conflict with residential land uses and odours from the facility. Stormwater requirements are also an issue for the town due to limited storage and treatment infrastructure for stormwater runoff before it enters Lake Hume.

CHARACTER, CULTURE AND IDENTITY

A defined civic centre is missing from the existing urban fabric of the township. Consideration in the Structure Plan will need to be given to identify areas for future commercial and civic activity, rather than relying on such uses to emerge organically.

Bellbridge contains a quiet, village-like feel and this will need to be respected and balanced when considering planning for future growth stemming from the satellite township pressures that emanate from the neighbouring regional cities.

The relatively high median house price may limit the diversity of the township residents in the future, and conversely, the rapid expansion of the town through the existing undeveloped Township Zoned land may have unintended consequences in terms of market prices and township culture and identity.

ENVIRONMENT

The impact of natural disasters is likely to increase in the coming years as a result of climate changes with more days over 30 degrees and reduced or sporadic rainfall. The risk of bushfire from the grassland interface with the township will remain a primary hazard and will need to be managed in future design, as well as flash flooding and reduced lake levels.

These issues may impact water quality, possible risk to human life from bushfire and reduced tourism from drought conditions.

Future consideration will need to be given to native vegetation and the potential for native grasslands to be present in areas designated for future change within the Bellbridge Structure Plan.

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

The lack of active transport options and connectivity reduces the likelihood of walking and cycling as a form of transport and recreation. Other recreation infrastructure is missing from Bellbridge including sports fields and a minimal interface with Lake Hume. The local topography and variance in lake levels compound these issues with no simple solution.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE, LOCAL SERVICES AND EDUCATION

Bellbridge does not contain any educational facilities aside from the early learning centre for young children.

Access to education is dependent on private motor vehicles mostly via the Bethanga Bridge. Consideration should be given to community and educational facilities and possible locations within the structure plan.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

As part of the Managing Cultural Landscapes project, several sites were identified as part of the desktop assessment in and around Bellbridge (see appendix 2). There are also existing areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity along the foreshore to Lake Hume, including some former Scar Tree sites identified as individual locations.

As part of the Managing Cultural Landscapes project, areas with significant views and vistas will be identified via a literature review and GIS mapping. Part of the issues in identifying these include an absence of a Registered Aboriginal Party, relatively few local Indigenous Representatives and sparse written history of pre colonial activity, values and people. The Managing Cultural Landscapes project seeks to build a framework for identifying, cataloguing and protecting these landscapes via a proactive planning approach.

Appendix 2 includes the Literature Review and some high-level mapping for Cultural landscapes and vistas.

POPULATION PROJECTION

The projections below are based on the average annual growth rate from between 2016-2021 as taken from the ABS data. Also taking into consideration the increased annual net international migration figures following the global Coronavirus pandemic into Australia, the general trend for capital city and interstate migration into Regional Victoria, sustained youth out migration from Towong Shire and an aging population.

The future population is projected to grow at an annual rate of approximately 2.5% (annual growth rate between 2016 - 2021) with a slowing of the growth rate and a possible increase in the natural death rate within the township as the average age of the township increases past the retirement age in the 2030s. Bellbridge also faces geographic and infrastructure constraints to further residential development which will restrict the ease at which the township grows. Topographical and wastewater treatment limitations could throttle the available supply of residential land in any case placing a cap on the upper limit of the total population of the township.

It is assumed that the population projections for the neighbouring Albury and Wodonga metro areas will continue to grow given the preference in the strategic framework as the growth areas and employment hubs for the region. This continued growth will directly affect the rate of population growth of Bellbridge which could lead to a period of exponential growth provided the available supply can be developed.

It is important to note that the below figures for Bellbridge are only estimates and should only be used as a guide based on the above assumptions.

Year	Predicted Population
2016	370
2021	393
2026	455
2031	525
2036	594
2041	672
2044	722

The population of Bellbridge as calculated by the 2021 Census was 393 people. Population projections based on historical analysis of Bellbridge expect to see the town's population increase by 75% to approximately 688 by 2044 (Bellbridge Issue & Opportunities Paper, Tomkinson 2024).
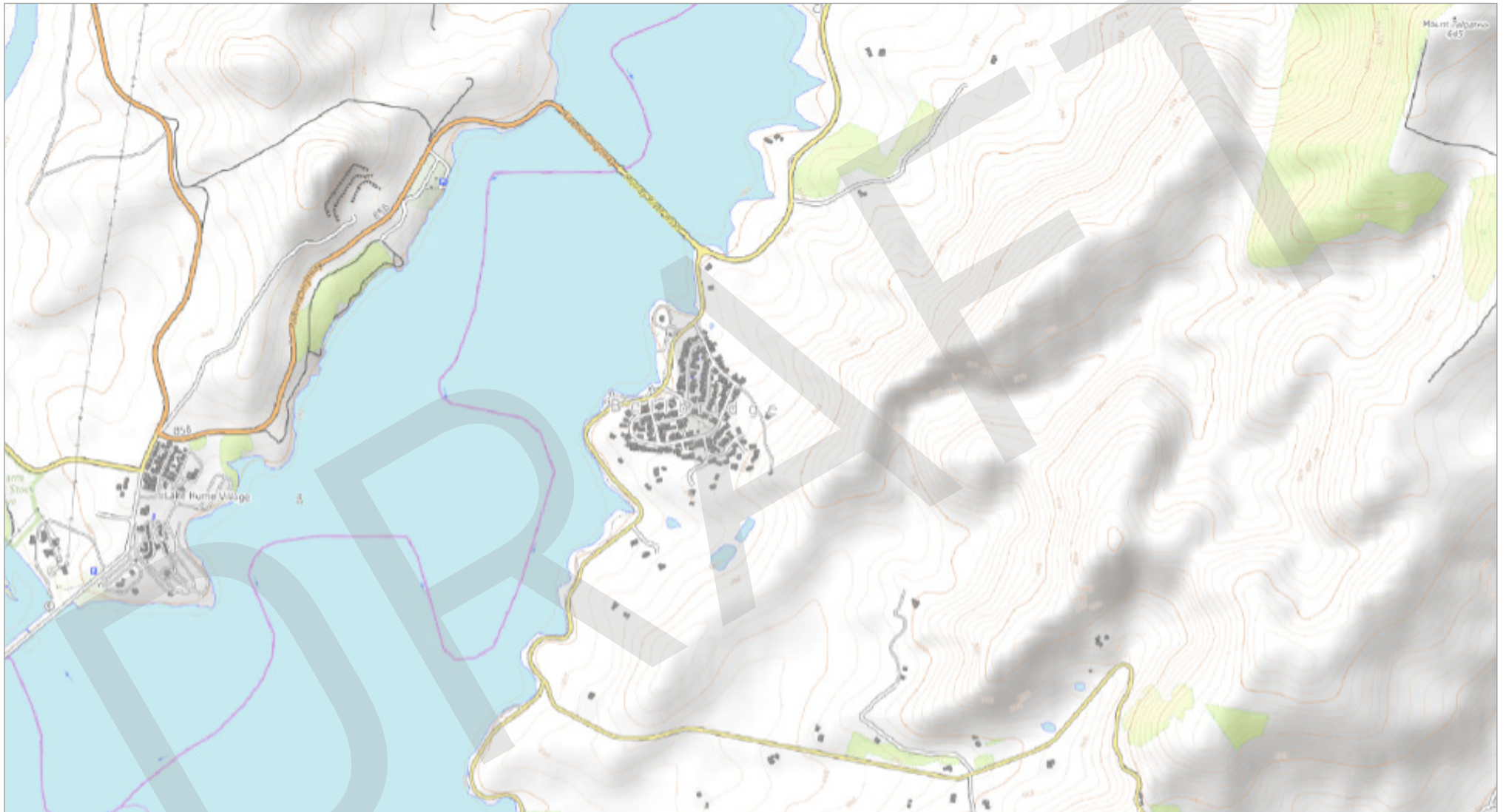
Figure 8: Map of Bellbridge and surrounds depicting topography and local roads. Tomkinson 2024.

03 - PILLARS - PRINCIPALS & OBJECTIVES

The Pillars are the overarching themes that have been distilled from the Placemaking Project undertaken by CHC consultants and community consultation sessions. The following pillars seek to capture the main aspects of the township that issues, opportunities and actions can be grouped under.

HOUSING

PRINCIPAL

The Structure Plan should provide guidance on future residential development options that meets the needs of the growing population while seeking to protect the character and village feel of the township. Where new opportunities are identified they should;

- Seek to protect and enhance valued character elements
- Make a positive contribution to the place and community
- Include appropriate policy guidelines to minimise risk to human life and property from bushfire and other risks
- Protect and provide for long term growth opportunities
- Ensure infrastructure provision is provided to support development

OBJECTIVE

In Bellbridge, it will be important to ensure that the emerging options that will inform the preparation of the Structure Plan are assessed in terms of the extent to which they:

- Meet the needs of existing residents while allowing for the sustainable growth of the township for new residents.
- Ensure the protection of the natural environment with regard to any expansion of the residential areas.
- Ensure the future built form of residential developments respects the existing character of the township.
- Promote a range of dwelling types and lot sizes.
- Integrate stormwater detention and treatment measures to prevent runoff into Lake Hume.

TOURISM AND ECONOMY

PRINCIPAL

The Structure Plan should seek to promote the development of a stronger and more diverse local economy with a range of services and businesses.

OBJECTIVE

In Bellbridge, it will be important to ensure that the emerging options that will inform the preparation of the Structure Plan are assessed in terms of the extent to which they:

- Leverage off Lake Hume as the main driver of tourism.
- Facilitate short term accommodation options for the township.
- Provide a town/village centre that contains a commercial heart of Bellbridge.

TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

PRINCIPAL

The Structure Plan should articulate the movement hierarchy in a manner that;

- Balances the needs of pedestrians, motorists, cyclists and public transport users.
- Promotes walkability and accessibility across the study area
- Ensures that any new development is well-connected and integrated with the existing network
- Where possible, provide more than one access and egress point for new subdivision sites

OBJECTIVE

In Bellbridge, it will be important to ensure that the emerging options that will inform the preparation of the Structure Plan are assessed in terms of the extent to which they:

- Enhance pedestrian and cyclist accessibility around the town, to more fully utilize the natural assets and reduce the reliance on motor vehicles for shorter journeys.
- Ensure future subdivisions have regard to its context and provides more than one point of access-egress.
- Improve the network of footpaths in and around the settlement and ensure new subdivision layouts factor in the existing network.

- Ensure that Bellbridge will be a well-connected and mobile community for all modes of transport;
- Will deliver additional pedestrian connectivity in the vicinity of the town centre;
- Provide connectivity between residential areas to open space and walking/cycling networks

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES

PRINCIPAL

The Structure Plan should take into consideration existing limitations of available services and infrastructure while looking to highlight areas for future improvement.

OBJECTIVE

In Bellbridge, it will be important to ensure that the emerging options that will inform preparation of the Structure Plan are assessed in terms of the extent to which they:

- Highlight potential areas for future growth with feedback from North East Water.
- Ensure there are appropriate setbacks to the EPA buffer area surrounding the wastewater treatment plan.
- Consider areas to be set aside for stormwater detention and treatment for new residential areas.

CHARACTER, CULTURE AND IDENTITY

PRINCIPAL

The Structure Plan should incorporate the feedback provided as part of the Placemaking project and the community engagement sessions. The prevailing sentiment held by local residents pertains to the retention of the village-like feel of the township when considering the future.

OBJECTIVE

In Bellbridge, it will be important to ensure that the emerging options that will inform preparation of the Structure Plan are assessed in terms of the extent to which they:

- Preserve the existing character and feel of the township while not prejudicing future growth and diversity of the township.
- Ensure built form is captured as part of the Towong Planning Scheme to protect neighbourhood character.
- Ensure new subdivisions provide a range of lot sizes to allow for a broad range of ages and household sizes to live within the community and age-in-place.

ENVIRONMENT

PRINCIPAL

The Structure Plan should consider the local environment and the broader environmental trends

when delivering on future land use and development within the township and surrounding areas.

OBJECTIVE

In Bellbridge, it will be important to ensure that the emerging options that will inform preparation of the Structure Plan are assessed in terms of the extent to which they:

- Consider existing native vegetation and the need to retain local flora where possible.
- Ensure future land use and development do not have any unreasonable detrimental effects on the local environment.
- Ensure new residential development appropriately considers stormwater detention and treatment.

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

PRINCIPAL

Ensure that the Structure Plan considers the need for recreation and open space for any future expansion of the township.

OBJECTIVE

In Bellbridge, it will be important to ensure that the emerging options that will inform the preparation of the Structure Plan are assessed in terms of the extent to which they:

- Consider any new areas for open space carefully given the existing open space areas and the lake foreshore area.

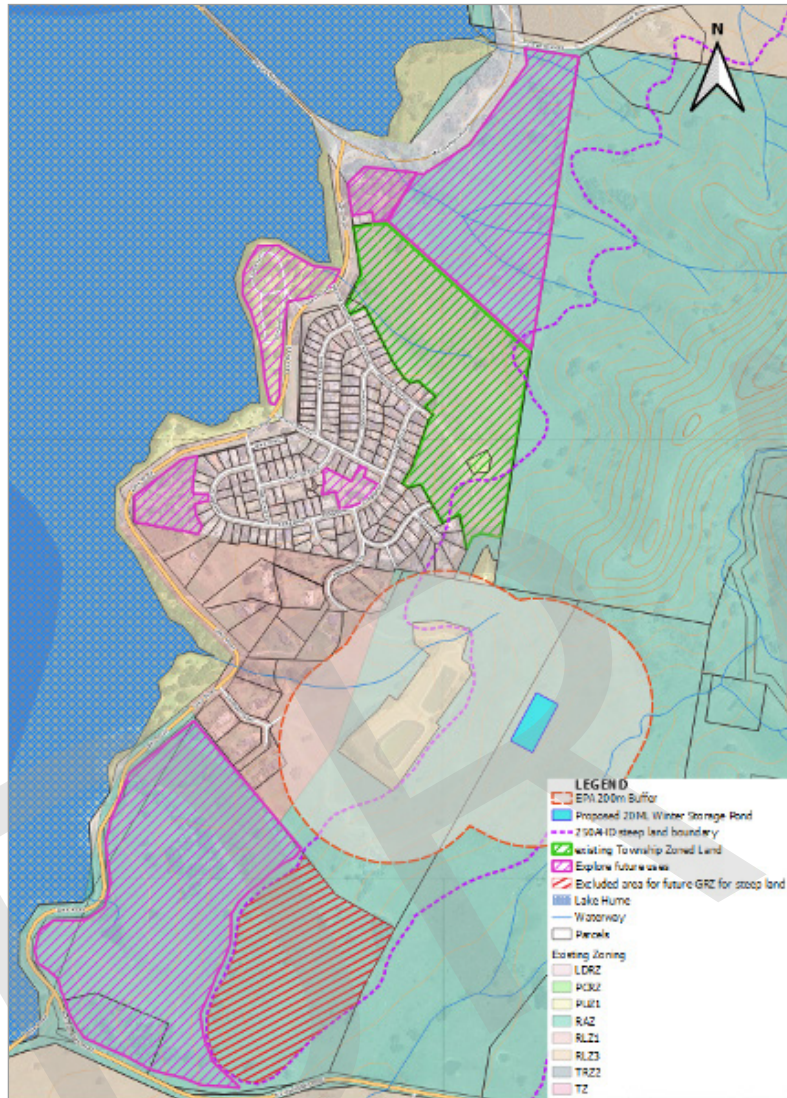## COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE, LOCAL SERVICES AND EDUCATION

PRINCIPAL

The Structure Plan will need to consider appropriate levels of community infrastructure provision balanced against the future growth of the township.
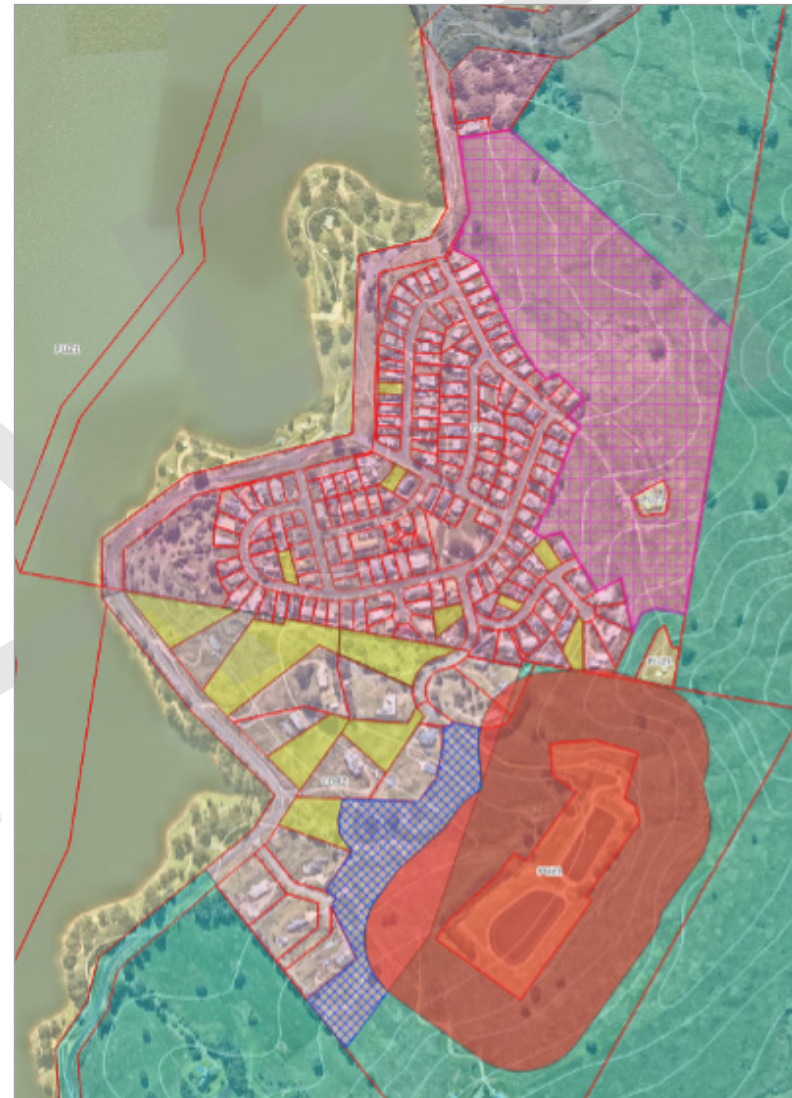
OBJECTIVE

In Bellbridge, it will be important to ensure that the emerging options that will inform preparation of the Structure Plan are assessed in terms of the extent to which they:

- Ensure there are appropriate areas set aside for the provision of community infrastructure in the Structure Plan.
- Consider the expansion of the existing early learning centre.
- Consider the provision of an emergency sevices hub for fire and ambulance.

Figure 9: Bellbridge Opportunities and Constraints Map. Tomkinson 2024.

LEGEND
- EPA 200m Buffer
- Proposed 20ML Winter Storage Pond
- 2.5(3)(4) ID steep land boundary
- Existing Township Zoned Land
- Explore future areas
- Excluded area for future GRZ for steep land
- Lake Hume
- Waterway
- Parcels

Existing Zoning
- LDRZ
- PCRZ
- PU21
- RAZ
- RLZ1
- RLZ3
- TRZ2
- TZ

Figure 10: Map of Bellbridge showing vacant residential land parcels shown in yellow. The thatched areas require further subdivision. Tomkinson 2024.

04 - KEY QUESTIONS

Out of the Issues and Opportunities Paper, the Bellbridge Opportunities and Constraints Plan (see figure 9 above) identifies key areas that can facilitate change across the township. It highlights the areas that could accommodate growth and change over the next 20 years. It attempts to represent the ideas, discussion and principles outlined in Parts 1 and 2 of the Emerging Options Paper.

The key pillars are listed below with a series of questions that may assist in provoking thought on key issues and assist in providing a response to Council.

Questions for consideration and feedback:

4.1 VISION

What is your vision for the future of Bellbridge?

How do you see the township changing and taking shape over the next 20 years?

4.2 HOUSING

Are there dwelling types that are missing from the Bellbridge township?

Should Bellbridge expand to allow new residents to settle in the town?

4.3 TOURISM & ECONOMY

Does the town provide for your needs currently?

Where do you do your higher-order shopping (i.e. clothing)?

Do you agree that population growth can support a permanent village commercial centre and encourage investment?

Would you like to see short term accommodation options provided in Bellbridge to support tourism?

4.4 TRANSPORT & ACCESS

Are there any significant transportation issues that you experience in your daily life in and around Bellbridge?

would you like to see active transport infrastructure (footpaths and cycle ways) constructed as part of new residential development?

Are there any issues with the Bethanga Bridge that you experience?

4.5 CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE & UTILITIES

Do you experience any issues relating to the wastewater treatment plant in town?

Do you have any feedback on the current stormwater and drainage infrastructure that services the township?

Are there any other critical services or infrastructure that causes issues or is missing from Bellbridge?

4.6 CHARACTER, CULTURE & IDENTITY

How would you describe the character of Bellbridge in terms of its people and the physical built form?

What, if any, parts of the local town identity, character and culture would you like to see retained and is there any aspect you think should be promoted within Bellbridge?

Are there any intangible cultural aspects of Bellbridge that may not have been accounted for that should be known and retained?

Are there any significant views of vistas that should be protected as part of the structure?

4.7 ENVIRONMENT

How do you perceive the quality and health of the local environment in and around Bellbridge?

4.8 RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

How often would you say that you use the Lake Hume foreshore?

How often would you say you use the Craig Drive Reserve?

How often would you say you use the Murray Place Tennis Courts?

Do you think the existing areas of open space are sufficient for the existing township?

4.9 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE, LOCAL SERVICES & EDUCATION

What would identify as essential or desirable community infrastructure that is needed in Bellbridge?

Would the expansion of the Early Learning Centre on Craig Drive be of benefit to the Bellbridge Community?

Are there any other educational services that Bellbridge requires to have within the township?

05 - MONITOR AND REVIEW

The Bellbridge Structure Plan has a 20 year timeframe which will require regular monitoring and review. A progress report on the implementation of the Structure Plan will be provided to Council every five years with an audit of the actions, commencing from when the Structure Plan is approved. Council can use the five-yearly progress report to adjust the implementation program to ensure that the plan is achieving the vision.

The Structure Plan review cycle is every five years to ensure that it remains relevant and consistent with Council's strategic policies, Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and the Council Plan, and to identify any changes required to respond to new trends, policies, strategies or changing circumstances. A holistic review of the Plan should commence in 10-15 years from the approval of the Plan by Council.

06 - STRUCTURE PLAN
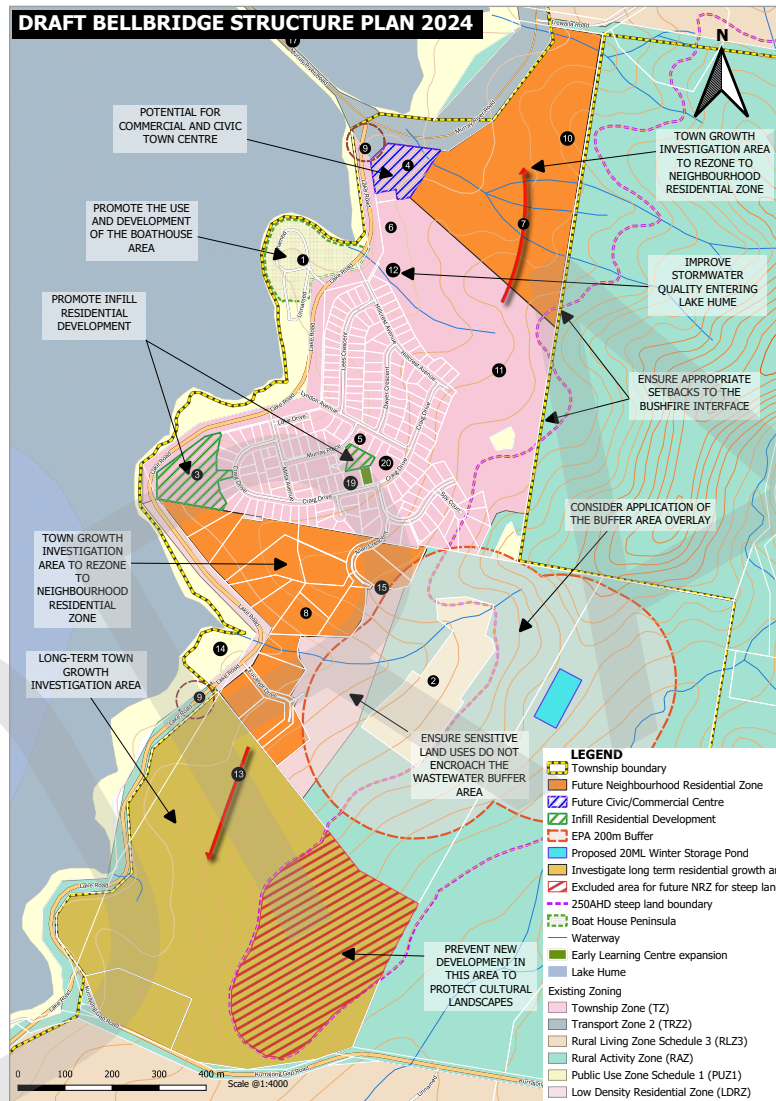
Figure 11: Bellbridge Structure Plan. Tomkinson 2024.

The numbers on the Structure Plan correspond to the Emerging Options listed in the table under Chapter 7 of this report below.

07 - STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY EMERGING OPTIONS

NON-STATUTORY EMERGING OPTIONS							
Action #	Action	Timing/ commenced	Duration	Council role	Priority	Partners	Stakeholder engagement
A1	Promote the future Boathouse redevelopment	Year 1 (current)	12-24 months	Implement	High	Residents, Landowner	Yes
A3	Support the infill residential development of 53 Craig Drive	Year 1	Ongoing	Implement	Medium	Landowners	No
A6	Investigate potential community service centre options for land opposite Lake Road near the town entrance	Year 1	12-24 months	Investigate	Medium	Landowner, Residents, GMW	Yes
A9	Explore options for a more defined town entrance on Lake Road	Year 2-5	2-5 years	Implement	Medium	Landowner, Residents, Council Engineering Department, DTP	Yes
A10	Undertake further investigation work to assess bushfire risk, flora and fauna assessments	Year 1	12 months	Implement	High	Residents, Landowners, DTP, DEECA, CFA	No
A12	Investigate options for a combined park and stormwater basin for new residential development near Lake Road	Year 1	Ongoing	Investigate/ assess	Medium	Landowners	Yes

	NON-STATUTORY EMERGING OPTIONS						
Action #	Action	Timing/ commenced	Duration	Council role	Priority	Partners	Stakeholder engagement
A14	Include wayfinding signage and new street furniture into the foreshore park areas. Create pedestrian linkages between main civic points	Year 1	12-24 months	Implement	High	Residents	Yes
A18	Set aside an area for the future expansion of the Early Learning Centre into Roy Williams Park	Year 1-3	12 months	Implement	High	Landowners, Residents	Yes
A19	Retain the existing Roy Williams Park in line with the other proposed actions	Year 1	Ongoing	Implement	High	Residents	Yes
A21	Consideration of location and viability of an Emergency Services hub	Year 1	12-24 months	Investigate	Medium	CFA, Ambulance Vic, Residents	Yes

	STATUTORY EMERGING OPTIONS						
Action #	Action	Timing/ commenced	Duration	Council role	Priority	Partners	Stakeholder engagement
A2	Consider placing the Buffer Area Overlay over the existing and proposed wastewater treatment ponds to ensure appropriate setbacks to sensitive land uses	Year 1-5	24 months	Investigate	High	Residents, Landowners, North East Water.	Yes
A4	Investigate future rezoning of land at 2 Murray River Road for future commercial land uses that are appropriate for surrounding sensitive land uses	Year 2-5	24 months	Investigate	High	Landowners, DTP, CFA, Residents	Yes
A7	Consider future rezoning of land north of the township to Neighbourhood Residential Zone to allow for future growth. Consider the Development Plan Overlay and Development Contributions Plan Overlay to be included as well	Year 2-5	24-36 months	Investigate	Medium	Landowners, Residents, DTP, CFA	Yes
A8	Consider rezoning the existing Low Density Residential Zone land to Neighbourhood Residential Zone	Year 5-10	24 months	Investigate	Medium	Landowners, DTP, CFA, Residents	Yes

	STATUTORY EMERGING OPTIONS						
Action #	Action	Timing/ commenced	Duration	Council role	Priority	Partners	Stakeholder engagement
A11	Consider rezoning existing areas of the Township Zone to the Neighbourhood Residential Zone. Ensure areas set aside for commercial or civic uses are located in the appropriate zone	Year 2-5	24 months	Investigate	High	Landowners, DTP	Yes
A13	Consider the potential rezoning of Rural Activity Zone land south of the existing township to Neighbourhood Residential Zone to accommodate future residents	Year 10-15	24-36 months	Investigate	Medium	North East Water, Residents, Landowners	Yes
A15	Consider and investigate rezoning the existing Low Density Residential Zone land within the wastewater treatment plan buffer area	Year 3-5	24 months	Investigate	Low	North East Water, DTP, Landowners	Yes
A16	Investigate amending the Schedule to the Rural Living Zone areas to the north and south of the township to accommodate smaller lot sizes	Year 1	12-24 months	Investigate	High	Landowners, CFA, DTP, GMW	Yes
A20	Consider the Development Plan Overlay and Development Contributions plan overlay to be added to new areas of residential rezonings in the future to protect character, address bushfire risk and cover infrastructure costs	Year 2-5	12-24 months	Investigate	Medium	Landowners, Residents, CFA, DTP	Yes

APPENDIX 1 – BELLBRIDGE ISSUE AND OPPORTUNITIES PAPER

DRAFT

APPENDIX 2 – MANAGING CULTURAL LANDSCAPES LITERATURE REVIEW

DRAFT

TOWONG SHIRE COUNCIL MANAGING CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Acknowledgement of Country

omkinson celebrates the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners throughout Australia, their rich culture and spiritual connection to the Country on which we work. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

A cultural landscape is a place with many layers of history that evolves through design and use over time. A cultural landscape embodies the associations and uses that evoke a sense of history for a specific place. Physical features of cultural landscapes can include trees, buildings, pathways, site furnishings, water bodies – basically any element that expresses cultural values and the history of a site.

Cultural landscapes also include intangible elements such as land uses and associations of people that influenced the development of a landscape. Cultural landscapes include neighbourhoods, parks and open spaces, farms and forests, sacred places, etc.

We acknowledge this this project is a starting point of change. We acknowledge that there is tension between the aboriginal heritage cultural landscape values and the post-settlement cultural landscape values. Pre-settlement values were often subsumed by post-settlement values, and there are positives and negatives arising from both. For example, if there was no settlement, the environmental values of the area would be pristine, but on the other hand settlement is what has fostered growth and productivity for a large number of people.

This is a tension that we all live with and I like to think we can acknowledge this and still celebrate our rich and diverse history.

Contents

The purpose of this report is to review the existing literature around cultural landscapes in Towong Shire and identify the knowledge gaps that are present regarding best practice planning policy. This report forms part of a wider investigation into the ongoing management of cultural landscapes within the municipality and will inform the Emerging Options Papers that will contribute to the Tallangatta, Corryong and Bellbridge Structure Plans (2024 – 2044).

This project acknowledges the current gap that exists in contemporary planning practice in Victoria around culturally sensitive landscapes. Through this body of work, we aim to identify and capture significant cultural landscapes within the structure plan areas and enshrine these in best practice planning policy and policy guidance, to be recognised now and into the future. The relationship between cultural and settler landscapes will also be considered.

We acknowledge that the information contained in this report may not be inclusive of all the local cultural values and does not reduce any legal requirements under the Heritage Act 2017, Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and / or other relevant legislation and policies. This report is intended as a starting point for recognition and will be built on over time.

2.0 Broad Thinking

Towong Shire's landscapes and values have long been recognised as integral to the area's distinguishing features and key strengths.

From spectacular natural backdrops of National Parks and other protected lands as well as the complex patchwork of agriculture, rural landscapes, bushland, rivers, towns and communities. Both settler culture and traditional owner culture can be seen and experienced across the Shire.

This document provides an analysis and mapping of the culturally valued landscapes used to inform the Emerging Options Papers associated with the Corryong, Tallangatta and Bellbridge Structure Plans.

Through a landscape lens, the document will consider:

- What makes the landscapes within Towong different or unique?

- Is a landscape of cultural value for contemporary reasons, settler heritage or aboriginal cultural value, or a combination?

- Are they worthy of protection? Is change acceptable?

- What are the emerging pressures and opportunities for scenic and cultural landscapes?

- What opportunities are there to protect and enhance culturally important landscapes through a structure planning process?

3.0 Cultural Landscapes

'Cultural landscapes' are defined as landscapes that have been transformed by human interaction as the result of ongoing development and land uses (The Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy 2020).

Cultural heritage is not just a remnant of history. It is constantly changing and evolving – often expressed through cultural traditions that have been reclaimed and revitalised in a contemporary setting.

Cultural landscapes include tangible and intangible characteristics, including: natural systems and features, spatial organization, land use, cultural traditions, cluster arrangement, circulation, topography & vegetation.

This relationship is reciprocal; culture adapts to a particular place, and that place is changed by people. Cultural ecology refers to the types of landscapes created by the interaction of people and their physical environment.

"Traditional Owner cultural landscapes are both material and symbolic and include Traditional Owner societies' unique worldview, ontology, history, institutions, practices and the networks of relationships between human and non-human animals, plants, ancestors, song lines, physical structures, trade routes and other significant cultural connections to Country"

The Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy 2020.

The VTOCLS suggests that Cultural landscapes are generally divided into three (3) categories:

Designed Landscapes	Organically Evolved Landscapes	Associative Landscapes
Designed landscapes are those that have a high degree of modification from the original natural landscape and are typically planned to be a certain way. These landscapes include parks, gardens, cemeteries, and Aboriginal burial grounds.	Organically evolved landscapes are those that have been influenced by interactions between land use and natural systems over time. These landscapes are generally not planned but rather moulded as a result of the ongoing land use in the area. They include productive and industrial landscapes such as goldfields, train lines and dams. Aboriginal-sensitive areas with evidence of scar trees and firestick farming are also included within these landscapes.	Associative landscapes are those that are important to people due to religious, artistic, or social associations and connections. The associations may be intangible and often contain a dominant landform such as a mountain, river or forest.

4.0 Why are cultural landscapes important?

Through this work, we aim to understand the scenic and cultural values of landscapes within areas identified for growth by way of the Structure Plans for Corryong, Tallangatta and Bellbridge and to provide recommendations for policies and programs to protect, maintain and enhance these landscapes now and into the future.

4.1 The document will be used by Council to:

- Inform the Emerging Options Papers for the Bellbridge, Tallangatta and Corryong Structure Plans.

- Provide recommendations to support amendment(s) to the Towong Planning Scheme by way of the Bellbridge, Tallangatta and Corryong Structure Plan(s)

- Identify important scenic landscapes, significant views / vista's and visually sensitive landscapes to be protected within the proposed town boundaries for Tallangatta, Corryong and Bellbridge.

- Understand the various characteristics of the landscapes identified for change and the potential risks to these landscapes

- Provide a management framework to conserve, maintain, enhance and manage these landscapes

4.2 The scope of the study is:

- To identify the broad landscape values of proposed change areas relating to the Bellbridge, Tallangatta and Corryong Structure Plans.

- For Council, Traditional Owner, Heritage groups and relevant stakeholders to work together to discuss the ways in which cultural values are identified and Cultural Heritage Management is addressed in planning within planning

- To ensure that interested Aboriginal parties and/or elders have opportunity to be included within the planning process for Bellbridge, Corryong and Tallangatta that affect and impact Country

- To present cultural values that present in and around the identified study areas with a particular focus on the identified change areas

- To recognise the importance of planned township expansion both as a way of ensuring that development meets demand and importantly, ensuring that existing local values are minimally impacted by such growth

- To examine and include information and data not traditionally included in cultural heritage surveys, such as important travel routes, identification of Food and Fibre resources, lookouts / peaks etc.

- To identify, conserve and enhance landscape characteristics and values for chosen growth areas

- To protect and manage highly sensitive landscapes

- To protect important vista and view corridors

- To enhance views and provide additional opportunities for the enjoyment of the views by the public

- To consider bushfire hazards and/or risks within the context of the proposed changes areas and town boundaries

5.0 Geographic Context

Towong Shire is located within the eastern part of the Hume Region and includes a large amount of the region's environmental and cultural heritage assets. The region is rich with a diverse range of environmental and cultural heritage assets. These include snow-covered mountains, alpine areas, lush river valleys, forests and woodlands, granite outcrops, floodplains and a myriad of cultural heritage, including both Aboriginal and historic places and objects.
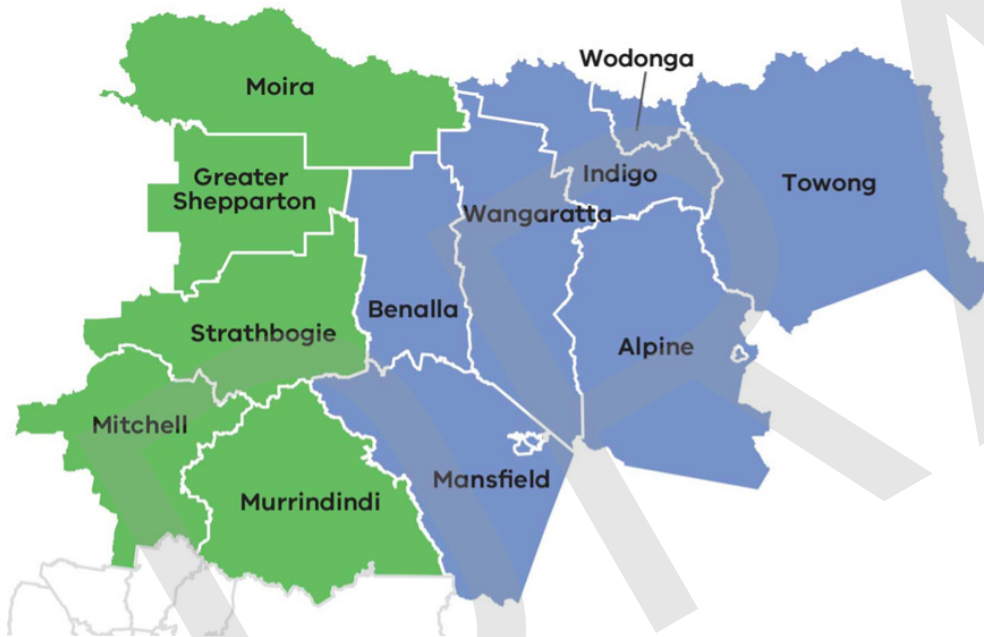

Figure 1: Hume Region – Regional Development Victoria 2024

6.0 Aboriginal Cultural Landscapes

Victoria contains a diverse range of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Places and Landscapes. This includes areas where Aboriginal people lived, ate, expressed themselves artistically, passed on creation stories and cultural values, engaged in conflict, established alliances and social networks, traded goods, celebrated rites of passage and committed the departed to their final resting places.

Places and objects of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage significance are usually found around food sources such as rivers, swamps, lakes and the coast. Some examples of the types of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage that shape the landscape include:

- Aboriginal Scar Trees
- Aboriginal mounds
- Aboriginal freshwater middens
- Aboriginal flaked stone tools
- Aboriginal burials

- Aboriginal surface scatters
- Aboriginal quarries
- Aboriginal ground-edge axes
- Aboriginal grinding stones
- Aboriginal stone arrangements

- Aboriginal axe-grinding grooves
- Aboriginal coastal shell middens
- Aboriginal rock art
- Aboriginal historical places
- Aboriginal places on private property

In the context of Towong Shire, there is evidence of such places and objects located throughout the municipality.
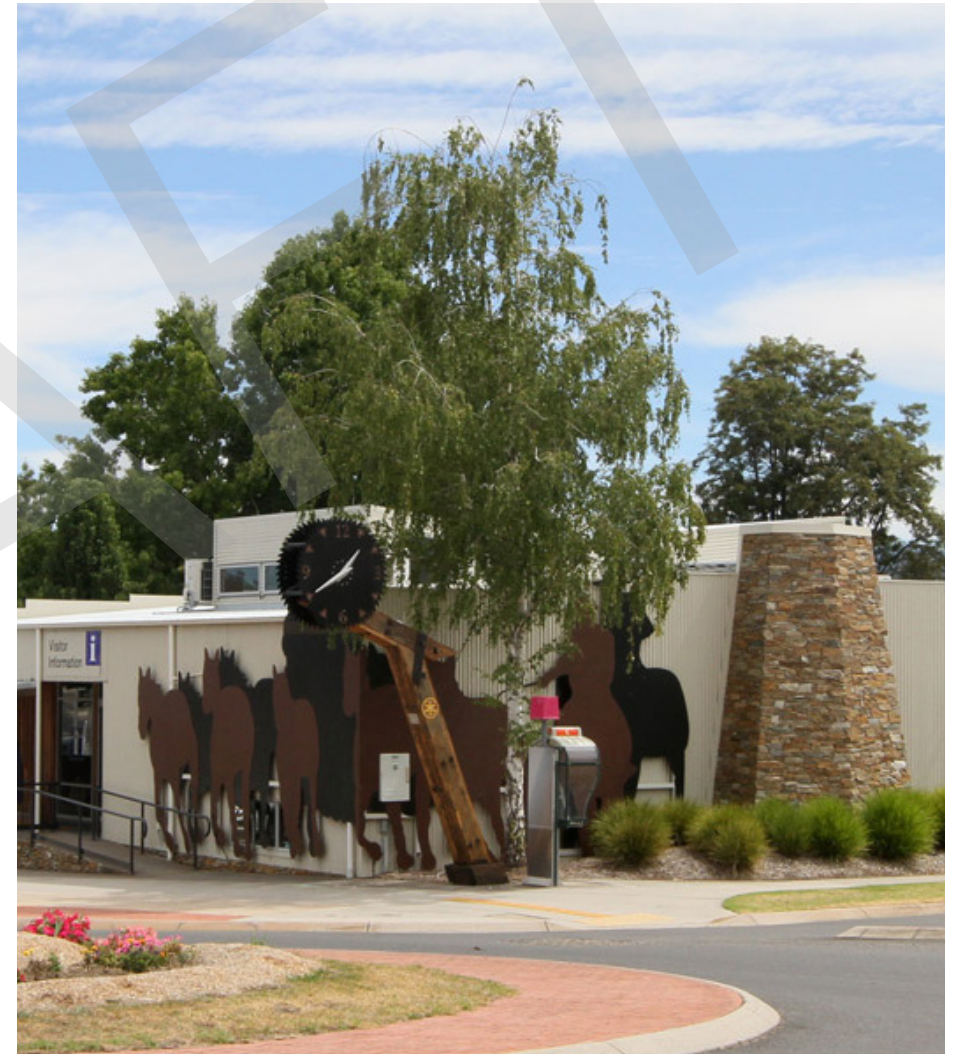
7.0 Local Planning Context

The Towong Planning Scheme provides some reference to the protection of significant landscapes. The polices look to protect and enhance significant landscapes and areas of cultural heritage. The Planning Scheme does not define what makes a landscape 'significant' or identify specific areas, apart from those classified in the National Trust, and rather looks to provide more broad-ranging protection measures by way of local planning policy and planning controls.

These are summarized below:

7.1 Clause 02.03-2 Environmental and Landscape Values

Towong Shire is located in the upper Murray River Catchment and contains significant areas of environmental biodiversity and landscape value including four (4) landscapes within the Towong Shire that are classified by the National Trust:

- Bethanga Lookout
- Burrowa-Pine Mountain National Park
- Mitta Mitta Valley
- Former Wodonga-Tallangatta-Cudgewa Railway Line

Additional significant protected areas include the Alpine National Park, Burrowa-Pine Mountain National Park, Wabba Wilderness Park, Mount Lawson State Park and Mount Granya State Park. The eastern part of the municipality is of landscape significance as it interfaces along the NSW border with the Kosciuszko National Park.

Lake Hume, the Murray River and Mitta Mitta River environs are of significant landscape value, particularly in the eastern part of the Shire, and at other specific locations including Tintaldra Station, Towong Hill Station and Tom Groggin Station.

Significant rural landscapes are also considered a key component of the Shire's attractiveness as a visitor destination. Apart from extensive views across pastoral landscapes to the treed slopes and hilltops beyond, there are also many views of significance from scenic lookouts and vantage points including Bethanga Lookout, Farran's Lookout, Mt. Alfred Lookout and Towong Gap.

7.1.1 Strategic directions

- Protect and enhance areas of identified landscape and environmental value.
- Assist the protection and conservation of biodiversity, particularly remnant vegetation.
- Protect and enhance river and wetland health.
- Site and design development so it does not detract from the natural and aesthetic values of significant landscapes.

7.2 Clause 02.03-5 Built Environment and Heritage

The overall cultural heritage of the Shire is evident in buildings, archaeological sites, trees, and other significant places that have scientific, aesthetic, architectural, cultural, historical, or social significance.

Being one of the earliest areas to be settled in Victoria it contains many surviving heritage places. These include those associated with its early post-contact occupation (such as homesteads of early pastoralists and selectors), its agricultural heritage (such as the Eskdale Butter Factory and Old Tallangatta Butter Factory), and its extant mining heritage.

7.2.1 Proposed Strategic directions

- Protect places of identified natural or cultural heritage significance, including pre-settlement heritage.

- Conserve and enhance elements that contribute to the significance of heritage places.

- Support development that does not adversely affect the significance of heritage places.

7.3 Clause 11.03-5S Distinctive areas and landscapes

7.3.1 Objective

To recognise the importance of distinctive areas and landscapes to the people of Victoria and protect and enhance the valued attributes of identified or declared distinctive areas and landscapes.

7.3.2 Strategies

- Recognise the unique features and special characteristics of these areas and landscapes.
- Implement the strategic directions of approved Localised Planning Statements and Statements of Planning Policy.

- Integrate policy development, implementation and decision-making for declared areas under Statements of Planning policy.

- Recognise the important role these areas play in the state as tourist destinations.

- Protect the identified key values and activities of these areas.

- Enhance conservation of the environment, including the unique habitats, ecosystems and biodiversity of these areas.

- Support use and development where it enhances the valued characteristics of these areas.

- Avoid use and development that could undermine the long-term natural or non-urban use of land in these areas.

- Protect areas that are important for food production.

7.4 Clause 12.05-1S Landscapes

7.4.1 Objective

To protect and enhance significant landscapes and open spaces that contribute to character, identity and sustainable environments.

7.4.2 Strategies

- Ensure significant landscape areas such as forests, the bays and coastlines are protected.

- Ensure development does not detract from the natural qualities of significant landscape areas.

- Improve the landscape qualities, open space linkages and environmental performance in significant landscapes and open spaces, including green wedges, conservation areas and non-urban areas.

- Recognise the natural landscape for its aesthetic value and as a fully functioning system.

- Ensure important natural features are protected and enhanced.

7.5 Clause 15.03-2S Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

7.5.1 Objective

To ensure the protection and conservation of places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance.

7.5.2 Strategies

- Identify, assess and document places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance, in consultation with relevant Registered Aboriginal Parties, as a basis for their inclusion in the planning scheme.

- Provide for the protection and conservation of pre-contact and post-contact Aboriginal cultural heritage places.

- Ensure that permit approvals align with the recommendations of any relevant Cultural Heritage Management Plan approved under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.

- The Towong Shire Council does not have a specific local policy on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, instead relying on the State policy found in Clause 15-03-2S.

8.0 Planning Overlays

8.1 Schedule 1 To Clause 42.03 Significant Landscape Overlay

The Towong Shire Planning Scheme contains one Schedule to the Significant Landscape Overlay. The Schedule predominately applies to the west of the Shire along Lake Hume and its foreshore. Other parts of the shire to the west do not include any landscape-specific planning overlay controls.

8.1.2 Landscape character objectives to be achieved

- To ensure that development is sited and designed so as to minimise the visual impact from an aesthetic and landscape impact perspective.

- To protect the Lake and the surrounding landscapes from visual intrusion from obtrusive development that may spoil the landscape attributes.

- To maintain, protect and enhance the character and diversity of Lake Hume landscapes including sites of remnant vegetation and sites of environmental significance.

- To encourage land development that does not degrade environmental values.

- To prevent land use and development from degrading water quality and polluting Lake Hume.
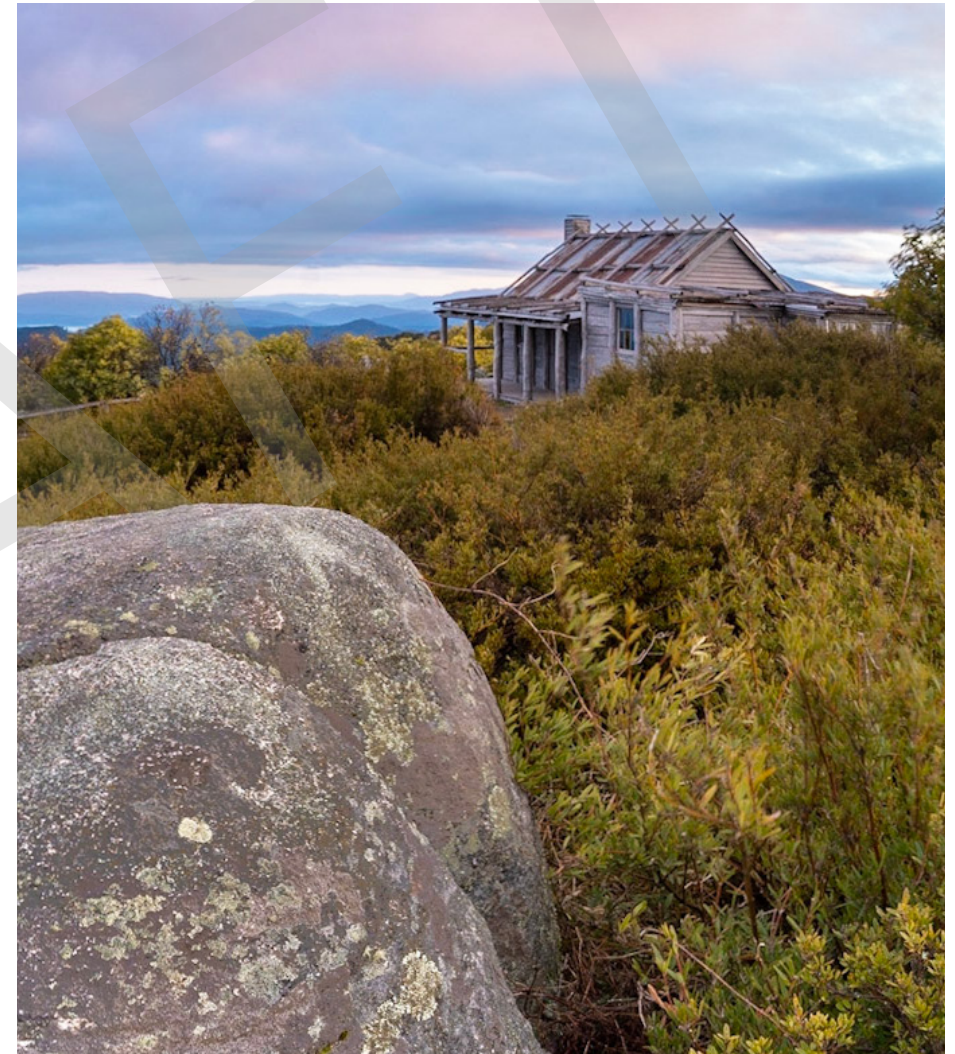
9.0 Strategic Planning Context and Review

9.1 Issues and Opportunities Identified in Hume Regional Growth Plan and Background Report 2014

The Hume Regional Growth Plan 2014 aims to protect and enhance the Hume Region's environmental assets for current and future generations by conserving these assets, protecting their intrinsic values and supporting sustainable communities.

Towong Shire is located within the eastern part of the Hume Region and includes a large amount of the region's environmental and cultural heritage assets. The map shown in Figure 3 demonstrates the entirety of the Towong Shire to the east of the region is located within an area of potential scenic landscape amenity.

The Hume region as a whole contains important river systems that run through Towong Shire, including the Murray River and the Mita Mita River. Additionally, it is estimated there are over 3000 wetlands in the Hume region.

While no scenic amenity studies have been conducted at the time of the report (2014), the report details that the Hume region likely contains areas of national, state and regional significance. A preliminary assessment was conducted that identified areas that may have some significant scenic value and elevated areas above 4000 metres and areas visible from strategic vantage points to foothills and mountains or down to the valleys, rivers and water bodies (Figure 4). Key locations include the Australian Alps, Great Dividing Range, Murray River, other river corridors and ribbons of roadside vegetation.

Figure 3: Future Directions – Environment and Heritage Map
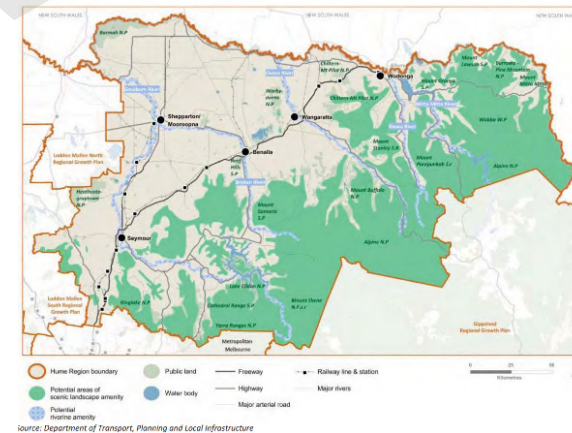
Figure 4: Hume Region Scenic Features and Vistas.

The Hume Regional Growth Plan 2014 (the Plan) identifies both Aboriginal and post-contact colonial heritage as important aspects of expressing, strengthening, and maintaining relationships with these places. The Plan states that when planning for growth and land use changes, cultural heritage is considered to be a community, economic and social asset. The Hume Regions' cultural assets, both Aboriginal and post-contact, are important to contemporary communities and heritage is integral to creating a sense of place.

The background report details that some mechanisms are in place to manage visual amenity and heritage values on public land, but a consistent, whole-of-region view of landscapes, across public and private land, has not been developed. It was identified that landscapes need to be identified, described and classified in a consistent way so that those with significant values (including aesthetic or heritage values) can be protected and maintained.

The Hume Regional Growth Plan 2014 formally identifies and recommends that an integrated and comprehensive regional landscape study is needed to identify landscapes of value within the region, including consideration of both the scenic quality and heritage values of landscapes, and to identify suitable planning mechanisms for their protection.

Lake Hume Land and On-Water Management Plan

Given the prominence of Lake Hume within the region, the Lake Hume Land and On-Water Management Plan (The Management Plan) aims to identify and protect important values associated with our waterways by outlining priority issues and identifying key actions to be implemented over the next five years.

The foreshore of Lake Hume is identified as a valuable asset to the surrounding area due to the scenic landscape values it presents in terms of recreation and tourism for the area. The Management Plan outlines the need for landscape plans or foreshore master plans for priority areas around the foreshore to preserve the values of the lake and foreshore and enhance the recreational use and facilities of the land surrounding Lake Hume.

The plan identifies strategies specifically relating to both the Aboriginal cultural heritage around Lake Hume, as well as the post-settlement cultural heritage.

- Develop a program to increase community appreciation of Aboriginal heritage at Lake Hume and implement recommendations of the Lake Hume Aboriginal Heritage Study.

- Identify, preserve and protect significant post-settlement cultural heritage at Lake Hume.

10.0 Significant Views and Landscape Character

Together with elements of the natural environment such as vegetation and wildlife, views are one of the key elements that Towong Shire is most valued for by the community and visitors and that contribute to making the Shire a special place. Views:

- Are integral to the scenic character and the experience of the landscape in Towong Shire

- Add significant tourism value

- Are essential to the sense of place and in establishing connections with surrounding areas

Visual connections are mirrored by historic and ongoing social and cultural connections between communities across the municipality. Examples of these include deliberately planned vistas between early homesteads and churches and towns that enforced social and cultural order of the 19th century.

Due to scenic and cultural importance of regional and district views, both are highly sensitive to unsympathetic development. Recommendations for the protection of views within Council's planning and policy framework are provide further in the Emerging Options Papers as relevant.

Landscape character is the result of a combination of natural, built and cultural elements that create a distinct and consistent pattern within a part of the larger landscape.

The landscape character of an area is more than a 'snap shot' from a single view point – it is experienced through the interaction of natural and cultural elements as one moves through the landscape. Views and scenery or scenic values contribute strongly to landscape character, especially when they convey a distinct sense of place. It is important to note that landscape character differs from scenic quality - a landscape can have a unique character and be of low scenic quality.

11.0 Summary

Towong Shire is comprised of traditional lands of the Jaitmatang, Yaithmathang, Duduroa Dhargal, Waveroo, Way-Wurru, Wiradjuri and Ngarigo people whose culture has for thousands of years practised environmental stewardship and shaped the landscape. This body of work is the start of Towong Shire acknowledging and continuing the traditional owners landscape values, stories and connections.

Despite widespread recognition of landscape and scenic values, the extent to which scenic and cultural landscapes have been defined, mapped or described to date remains limited. This presents challenges for the planning system in determining what is valuable and how to protect scenic or cultural landscape values from unsympathetic development.

The preparation of this work has been identified as a high priority action by Council in order to address this information gap and enable the planning system to integrate appropriate mechanisms for scenic and cultural landscape protection.

Tomkinson

APPENDIX 3 – COMMUNITY FEEDBACK RECORDS
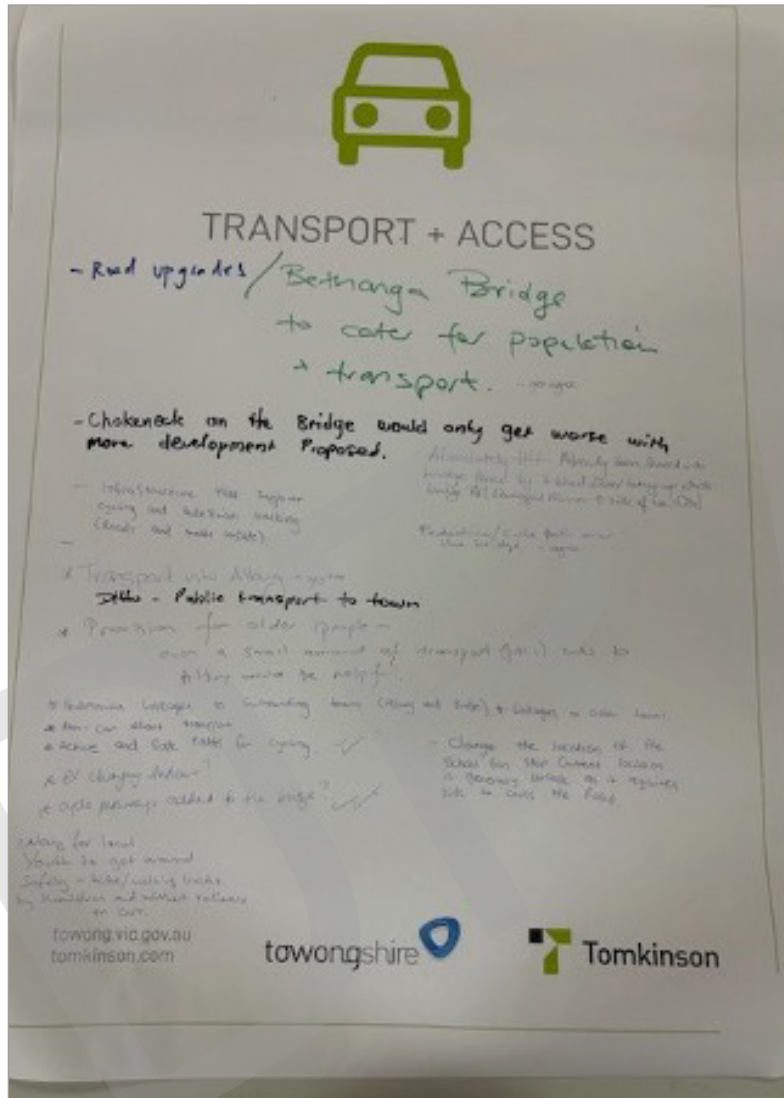
CHARACTER, CULTURE + IDENTITY

- limited shops
- unique
* CAFE / BOATHOUSE

Light up the Bridge + Walkway

A place to come together socially

A small shop so that people dont have to go to Adm for every little thing?

Not develop the town too much as small + friendly is beautiful and a primary reason why people live here.

- Ensuring waterfront properties remain usefor to stay consistent with Culture and recreational use of the area (Boating and Fishing)

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CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE + UTILITIES

- Having services available
* Electricity Availability

- phone tower
- internet
- Emergency service contact / Infrastructure provision

- HIGH TRAFIC

- NEED a community centre here — Yes Agree!
YES YES!

- An attractive

- infrastructure provision

- Please do not remove the current Public toilets.

- Flooding along craig Drive.

- AGE CARE CENTRE

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HOUSING

- Supply
- Demographic + Demographic change

- Worried about larger Population and affect on Amenity.
- Murray Place and condition
- Housing design
- Housing volume
- Housing product?
- LIFESTYLE Blocks
- Public Housing in area as well?
- Housing for an aging demographic

ENVIRONMENT

Urban Amenity
- how the town looks
- Footpaths
- Roads
- Potential Flooding

APPENDIX 4 – AGENCY FEEDBACK RECORDS

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