



Nathalia Strategy Plan

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Prepared by CPG

CPG

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Nathalia Strategy Plan

The Nathalia Strategy Plan has been prepared for the Moira Shire Council to assist in ensuring a continued sustainable future for the town of Nathalia.

A Strategy Plan is a long term planning document that guides major change to land use, infrastructure and built form by setting out preferred directions for growth and how the changes should be managed setting out ideas and actions that can be undertaken over many years; by the Council and other stakeholders.

The Strategy Plan sets out the scale and direction of development in Nathalia to meet the future needs of the community and gives clear direction to owners, investors, government bodies, business operators and the Council about preferred locations for investment and change; as well as areas that need to be retained and enhanced.

The broad directions for land use and development in Nathalia have been derived through the investigation and identification of the following:

- Existing conditions within the study area;
- The strategic planning context of the study area;
- Supply and demand of land for various uses/activities;
- Relevant opportunities and constraints;
- Future growth and development strategies; and
- Appropriate implementation techniques.

The Strategy Plan has been prepared by CPG Australia (formerly Coomes Consulting Group). The project commenced in January 2008 and has involved extensive consultation with the community, landowners, Moira Shire Council officers and councillors, government agencies and authorities and other key stakeholders.

Over recent years several strategic studies have been undertaken for Nathalia by Moira Shire addressing issues as diverse as industrial needs and opportunities for rural living. Many of these studies have made recommendation on changes to zoning in and around Nathalia. The Strategy Plan was commissioned by the Moira Shire Council to synthesis these studies and make recommendations on zone and policy changes for the town of Nathalia.

The Strategy Plan is a stand alone policy document. It is envisaged that the Strategy Plan will be referenced within the Moira Planning Scheme.

1.2 The Study Area

The Nathalia Strategy Plan Study Area incorporates the urban area of Nathalia and land on the fringe of the urban area (refer Figure 1).

Nathalia is located approximately 40 kilometres north of Shepparton, on the banks of Broken Creek. With a population of approximately 1,430, it has, and will continue to have, a valuable role as a social and commercial centre for the towns residents and surrounding rural community.

Figure 1 – Nathalia Study Area



Source: Moira Shire Council, 2008

1.3 Objectives of the Strategy Plan

The State Planning Policy Framework provides a range of policies relevant to the study area with Clause 14 Settlement being the most relevant. The general objectives of the Strategy Plan are consistent with the objectives of Clause 14 of the Moira Planning Scheme – Settlement.

Consequently, the objectives of this Strategy Plan are to:

- Facilitate the orderly development of urban areas, including for residential, commercial/business, industrial, open space and recreational land use activities.
- Make effective use of existing infrastructure, particularly through urban consolidation within existing urban zones as well as areas identified for growth.
- To contain urban growth to identified areas in order to protect higher quality and intact agricultural areas and sensitive environmental areas and to achieve a more compact built up area.
- Provide for the development of sustainable and liveable urban areas in an integrated manner.
- To release land efficiently in terms of location, supply of services and infrastructure.
- To facilitate the logical and efficient provision of infrastructure.
- Seek to minimise potential land use conflicts through appropriate zoning and/or other statutory planning tools such as overlays, design guidelines, local policies and the like.

1.4 Public and Stakeholder Consultation

One of the vital components of a Strategy Plan is the incorporation of stakeholder consultation. Consultation sessions were held in Nathalia in March, April and October 2008 with the following key industry stakeholders:

- Business and community individuals and groups;
- Council officers and Councillors;
- Local residents;
- Landowners;
- Servicing authorities; and
- Relevant government agencies.

The consultation sessions focussed on the identification of the perceived issues facing Nathalia at present and the identification of important projects to be undertaken and appropriate strategic direction to be achieved over the next 15-20 years.

The feedback received from the consultation sessions has played an important role in the formulation of the draft Strategy Plan.

Council will be seeking further community feedback on the draft Strategy Plan when it is placed on public exhibition. This feedback too, will play an important role in finalising the Strategy Plan for Nathalia.

2 Background and Context

2.1 Overview of Nathalia

Nathalia is an attractive town set on the Broken Creek in north-central Victoria. It is approximately 20 minutes drive from the Murray River and a 2.5 hour drive to Melbourne. Some of the attractions of Nathalia include an established 'country feel' shopping centre and excellent sport and educational facilities.

Nathalia is highly dependent by surrounding agricultural land; with a large proportion of its population employed in the agricultural or manufacturing industries (generally associated with agricultural production).

Nathalia's European history dates back to 1838, when the region was first explored by Charles Sturt. Significant events that led to the town's development are as follows:

1843	The town was established on the 'Kotupna' station, by W.J. Locke.
1861-1869	The town was divided in two then broken up for closer settlement.
1875-1878	Richard Blake took up land on the future town site and built a sawmill and a flour mill. The first hotel was licensed and the first post office, state school and Wesleyan Church were opened. The streets were named after early landholders. The town's main thoroughfare (Blake Street) was modelled on Sturt Street in Ballarat.
1880	Nathalia gazetted as a village
1905	The population reached 1,000 and the town had settled into the role it enjoys to this day as a service centre to the district which produces wheat and other crops.

In recent times, the Moira Shire Council has commissioned a number of studies and reviews for Nathalia and the wider municipality; however many of these studies only addressed specific issues. To update and build upon the existing Nathalia Structure Plan as prepared in 2003, these reviews and studies need to be brought together to form the framework for a Strategy Plan that will guide major changes to land use, built form and infrastructure.

Nathalia is fortunate to have a pattern of development whereby there is little conflict between land use activities. To ensure that this can continue, and to achieve economic, social and environmental improvements for the town, it is fundamental that a strategic approach to the development of Nathalia for a 15-20 year horizon is adopted.

2.2 Planning Policy Framework

All land within the study area is governed by the Moira Planning Scheme. The components of the planning scheme applicable to strategic development of the study area are:

- State Planning Policies;
- The Moira Municipal Strategic Statement;
- Land Use Zonings; and
- Overlay Controls

In addition to the relevant components of the Moira Planning Scheme, a number of policies and research reports have been prepared in recent years that may influence the future development of the study area. A review of the relevance of these policies and research reports to the Nathalia Study Area has been undertaken and referenced throughout this Plan.

2.2.1 State Planning Policy

Clause 11 (Introduction, goals and principles) and Clause 14 (Settlement) of the Moira Planning Scheme are of particular note in planning for the strategic growth and development of Nathalia.

The principles of land use and development planning are addressed in Clause 11 of the Moira Planning Scheme. In particular the Clause states *'Society has various needs and expectations such as land for settlement, protection of the environment, economic well-being, various social needs, proper management of resources and infrastructure. Planning aims to meet these by addressing aspects of economic, environmental and social well-being affected by land use and development'*. This Strategy Plan has been prepared to address the various needs of the Nathalia community.

State policy in relation to urban settlement (Clause 14.01 of the Moira Planning Scheme) states that planning authorities should plan to accommodate projected population growth over at least a ten year period. The Draft Strategy Plan provides the planning framework for the next 15 – 20 years and aims to facilitate the orderly development of Nathalia.

2.2.2 Municipal Strategic Statement

The Moira Shire Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) provides the key strategic planning, land use and development objectives for the municipality and the strategies and actions for achieving those objectives. The Moira MSS promotes the objectives of planning in Victoria to the extent that State policies are applicable to the Moira Shire.

The Moira MSS contains a number of references to Nathalia. The MSS identifies Nathalia as one of four of the Shire's principle townships. Nathalia, although not the fastest growing centres within the municipality, had 27 dwellings constructed in the 5 year period from 2001 to 2006.

The MSS also recognises the aging population of the shire and the need to provide affordable housing within easy access to physical and social services, in particular within the four large urban centres, including Nathalia.

“Council’s Settlement Goal is to ensure that the majority of future residential growth and development occurs within the Shire’s existing townships and that such growth is accommodated for in a planned, rather than ad hoc manner. Rural lifestyle opportunities are to be provided in identified and appropriately zoned areas rather than being dispersed throughout the rural areas of the Shire in order to protect agricultural land for agricultural uses, avoid urban-rural conflicts and to facilitate efficient servicing.”

Council’s current Settlement Strategies for Nathalia are:

- *Future development of the township of Nathalia will be generally in accordance with the Nathalia Town Structure Plan (Refer 21.04-5);*
- *The strengths of the town centre, with open space, historic buildings and proximity to Broken Creek, and the entries to the town will be developed and enhanced through the continued staged implementation of the 1994 Streetscape Plan as funding permits;*
- *Gateway treatments at town entries will promote the local identity of the town;*
- *Residential development will occur through infill development and development of new housing at a variety of densities to the west of the township;*
- *Business development will consolidate the retail precinct and will be sympathetic to the heritage buildings and streetscape;*
- *Industrial development will be focused north of the town in existing zoned areas; and*
- *Frontage to the Broken Creek will be maximised as a recreation and tourist feature.*

The MSS further notes the importance of having appropriately serviced and zoned land to allow for new industrial development in towns such as Nathalia and also recommends the preparation of an Industrial Land Strategy which has been completed.

2.2.3 Land Use Zoning and Overlays

Various land use zones are applied to Nathalia and provide relevant objectives and development controls (refer Figure 2 Nathalia Zoning Plan).

Additional planning provisions apply to areas and specific sites through the application of various overlays. Overlays include requirements about development, not use. Overlays, as applied to the study area offer planning controls in relation to built form, heritage and environmental considerations. The overlays applicable to Nathalia and immediate surrounds are:

- Development Plan Overlay – Schedule 1
- Heritage Overlay
- Rural Floodway Overlay
- Land Subject to Inundation Overlay

Refer to Figure 3a – 3c for Overlay Plans.

2.3 **Moira Shire Council Plan**

Title	Council Plan 2006/2007 to 2009/2010
Date	2006
Author	Moira Shire Council
Status	Adopted

Summary of Findings:

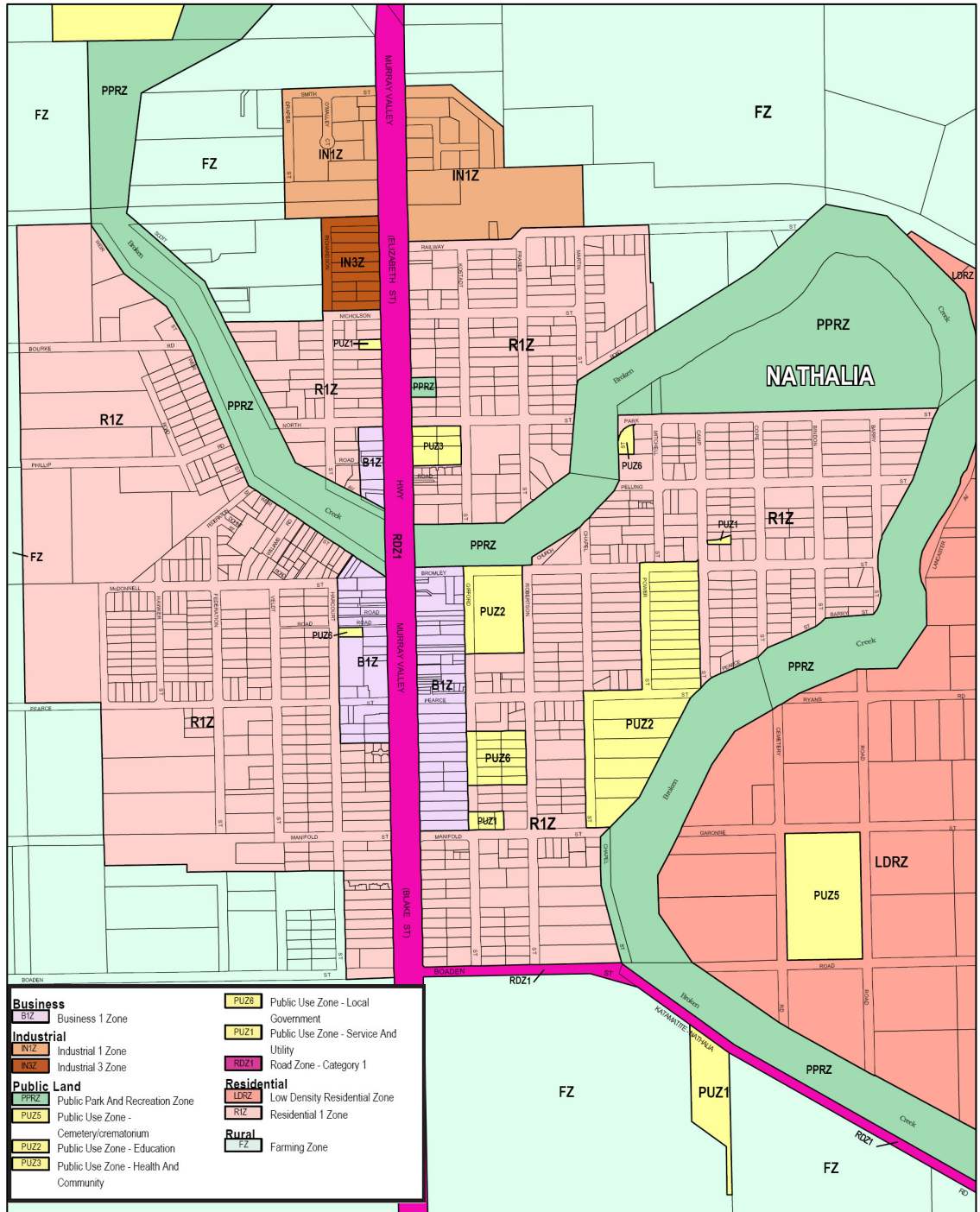
In 2006 the Moira Shire Council developed a Council Plan that focused on the five pillars of wellbeing:

- Built and physical environment
- Social
- Economic
- Natural environment
- Government

In order to achieve the outcome for liveable communities “*Planning and building control for a vitalised community*” the Council Plan nominates the following strategies:

- To continue to develop guidelines and policies to ensure that planning decisions reflect best practice.
- To encourage environmentally sound building design and practices which minimise resource and energy use.
- To continue to develop guidelines and policies to ensure the design of subdivisions reflect best practice.
- To continue to undertake strategic planning to ensure sustainable urban and rural land use and development for the benefit of the community.

Figure 2: Zone Plan for Nathalia



Source: Moira Planning Scheme, extract from Zone Map No. 13
Refer to Map No. 12 for areas surrounding Nathalia

Figure 3a: Development Plan Overlay Plan for Nathalia

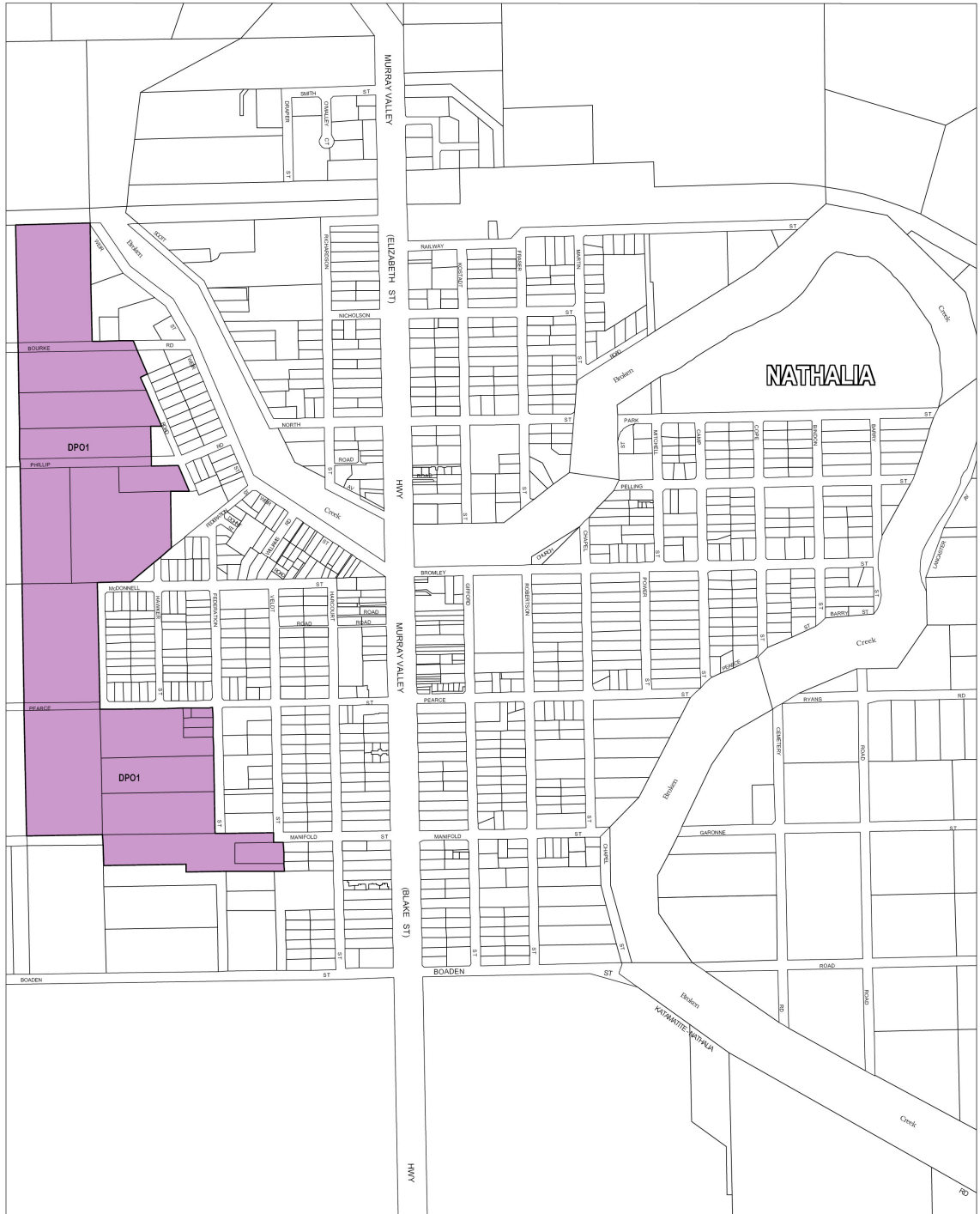
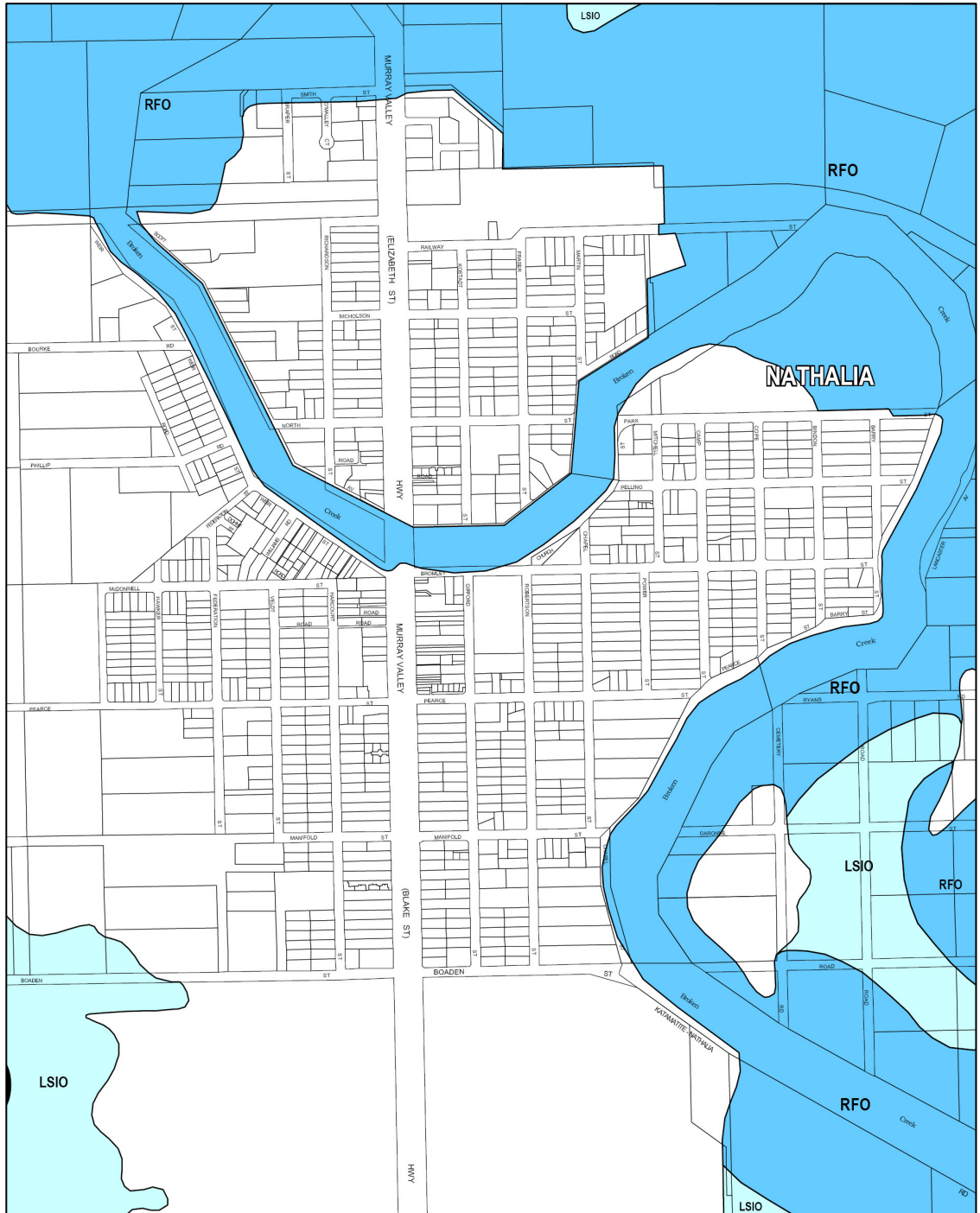


Figure 3b: Heritage Overlay Plan for Nathalia



Source: Moira Planning Scheme, extract from Plan 13HO

Figure 3c: Land Subject to Inundation and Rural Floodway Overlay Plan for Nathalia



Source: Moira Planning Scheme, extract from Plan 13LSIO-RFO

2.4 Previous Studies and Reviews

The following studies and reviews provide background context to this Strategy Plan and/or are referred to in this draft report:

- Moira Shire Economic Development Strategy 2008-2013, The Regional Development Company, July 2008;
- *Moira Shire Industrial Zones Review*, Maunsell's Australia Pty Ltd, Nov 2004;
- *Industrial Zones Review Revisited*, Moira Shire Council, August 2007;
- *Moira Rural Living Strategy*, O'Neil Pollock & Assoc Pty Ltd, 2004;
- *Nathalia Development Plan Report*, EarthTech & TTM Consulting, Sept 2006;
- *Nathalia's Strategic Plan*, Uncommon Solutions Bendigo, March 2005;
- *Moira Shire Cycling & Walking Strategy*, Arup, April 2005;
- *Three Year Review of Moira Planning Scheme*, SMEC Australia, March 2007;
- *2006-2007 Moira Shire Council Plan*, Moira Shire Council;
- *Moira Social Plan 2007-2010*, Coomes Consulting Group, 2007;
- *Moira Shire Stage One & Two Heritage Study*, Lorraine Huddle & Associates, 2007;
- Background documents to Amendment C13 to the Moira Planning Scheme;
- Moira Planning Scheme; and
- *Moira Flood Study*, SMEC Australia.

3 Strategy Plan Philosophy

3.1 Settlement Vision

To ensure the viable and sustainable future of Nathalia, the towns requires a vision that is focus on the use of good urban design principles in particular highlighting the natural assets and community facilities the town comprises of . On this basis the vision for Nathalia is:

“A sustainable environment that will encourage innovative design to compliment and enhance the natural environment and heritage significance and encourage the support of the educational and recreation facilities within the town”

3.2 Land Use Mix

A sustainable mix of land uses is proposed for the Nathalia study area. It is the holistic consideration of all existing conditions and issues as they relate to the study area that has informed the vision and primary strategies for this Strategy Plan.

Nathalia is fortunate to be structured in a clear grid layout. Typical of a country town the commercial area is generally located along the main road traversing the centre of town. An industrial precinct has established to north of town. Educational facilities have generally been established to the east of the town centre and recreational facilities to the north east. Standard residential has generally surrounding the town centre and the recreational and educational facilities. Low density residential/rural living development has generally occurred further east and to the south west of the town centre.

The historical distribution of land uses in Nathalia does not require restructuring, although Nathalia is constrained by flooding to the north of town. This is limiting the expansion of the existing industrial precinct. The Strategy Plan provides for additional industrial land adjacent to the existing precinct but any long term industrial land has been identified to the south of the town, located away from sensitive land uses such as residential or recreational areas.

Nathalia has enough existing residential zoned land to the west of the town centre that is expected to cater for demand forecasts in the short to long term. To not limit the possible expansion of residential land in the future land to the immediate south of the town has been identified for long term residential growth direction with a buffer to any future industrial land.

Diversity is encouraged through the Strategy Plan, particularly in relation to the form, density and location of residential areas. A sustainable mix of infill opportunities is encouraged within the Plan.

It is acknowledged that Nathalia cannot continue to expand through residential growth alone and a sufficient and sustainable mix of land is required for commercial, industrial and necessary facilities such as medical facilities. The following sections of this Plan address these particular land uses in greater detail.

3.3 Environmental Considerations – Flora and Fauna

Clause 15.09-1 of the Moira Planning Scheme refers to the conservation of native flora and fauna. Specifically, the objective of this clause is:

“To assist the protection and conservation of biodiversity, including native vegetation retention and provision of habitats for native plants and animals and control of pest plants and animals”.

The Broken Creek traverses the Nathalia town centre. The Creek and its environs are contained within the Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ). The zone encourages the not only the protection and conservation of these area but also the utilisation of these areas for recreation and open space.

3.4 Environmental Considerations – Flooding

Clause 15.02 of the SPPF in the Moira Planning Scheme refers to the management of floodplains. Specifically, the objective of this clause is

“To assist the protection of:

- *life, property and community infrastructure from flood hazard;*
- *the natural flood carrying capacity of rivers, streams and floodways;*
- *the flood storage function of floodplains and waterways;*
- *and floodplain areas of environmental significance”.*

The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GBCMA) is responsible for floodplain management within the study area. GBCMA advised they would not allow the expansion of the town any further north of the existing industrially zoned land. A levee bank that has recently been constructed has provided the opportunity for infill development to the west of the existing industrial precinct. Furthermore, there is flood free land to the east of the existing precinct.

The GBCMA has also advised that due to the flood impact to the east of town, they would only allowing the construction of one dwelling per landowner on land within the Low Density Residential Zone. Any future expansion of Nathalia will need to be to the west and south of the town.

3.5 Cultural Heritage

Clause 15.11-1 of the Moira Planning Scheme refers to heritage significance. Specifically, the objective of this clause is *“To assist the conservation of places that have natural, environmental, aesthetic, historic, cultural, scientific or social significance or other special value important for scientific and research purposes, as a means of understanding our past, as well as maintaining and enhancing Victoria’s image and making a contribution to the economic and cultural growth of the State”.*

There are a number of sites in Nathalia that are contained within the Heritage Overlay, refer to Figure 3b.

The Moira Shire Council and Heritage Victoria have commissioned Lorraine Huddle to prepare a Heritage Study for the Moira Shire, including Nathalia. The study has identified 153 heritage places within Nathalia with 111 places within heritage precincts. The study has identified five heritage precincts being:

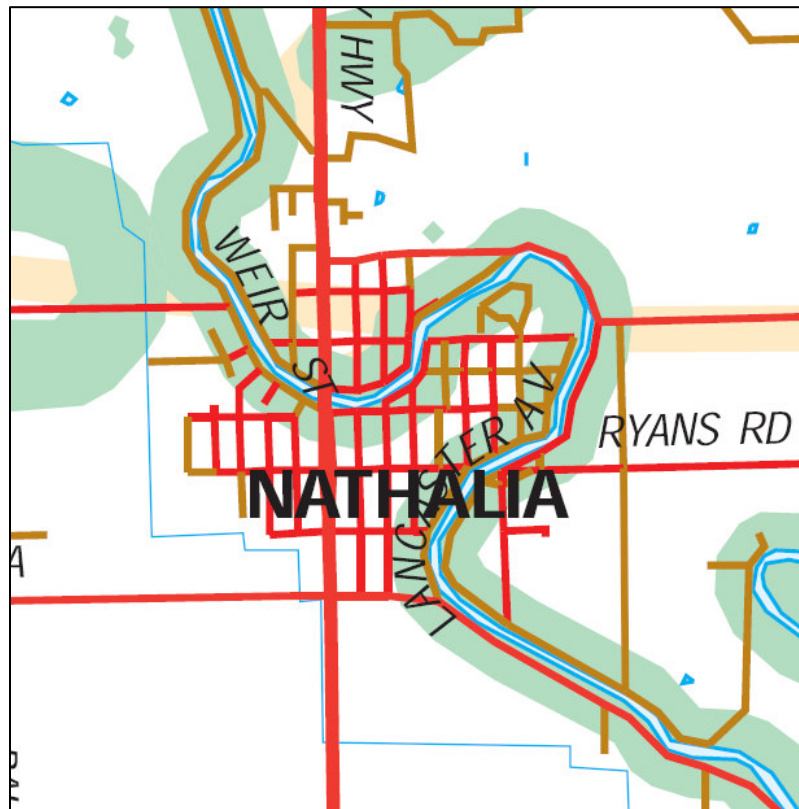
- Nathalia Broken Creek Precinct
- Nathalia Church Precinct
- Nathalia Kostadt (Old Town) Precinct
- Nathalia Kurradjong Precinct
- Nathalia Town Centre Precinct

The study has recommended the 153 places be included in the Heritage Overlay.

The Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 came into effect on 28 May 2007. The land adjacent to the Broken Creek in Nathalia are areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity, refer to Figure 4.

A desktop review of these areas indicates that much of the land has already been developed. Any areas that will be developed in the future may require a cultural heritage management plan to be prepared if not previously significantly disturbed.

Figure 4: Area of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity Map



Source: Extract from Map No. 7925 SHEPPARTON Areas of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity in Victoria, Aboriginal Affairs Victoria Website

3.6 Servicing and Infrastructure

Servicing and infrastructure of existing and any proposed new development areas is an essential consideration of any Strategy Plan. Infrastructure should be used and provided in an efficient and effective manner. The following services are available in the town:

- Goulburn Valley Water for the provision of reticulated water and sewer,
- Telstra for telecommunications,
- Powercor for electricity,
- Moira Shire Council is the responsible drainage authority,

Servicing and infrastructure comments in regard to specific types of land use activities are considered and addressed in this Strategy Plan. An overview of each service is provided below.

Water Services

Goulburn Valley Water (GVW) is the responsible water supply authority.

GVW has advised it generally has good capacity for servicing Nathalia. Servicing of the growth areas can be achieved by connecting to nearby assets and through the construction of water main extension throughout the development plan areas. The cost of new works must be in accordance with the statutory guidelines of the Essential Services Commission (ESC) and is to be funded at the cost of the developer and/or GVW.

Generally, the developer must fully fund non-shared reticulation water mains within a developer's landholding that are 150mm or less in diameter. Larger trunk mains or shared distribution assets are to be fully funded by GVW or otherwise by agreement between GV Water and the developer(s) with ESC consent.

There are formulae that apply to the funding of shared distribution assets whereby in the event that the said asset is not reasonably expected to be funded within GVW's financial forward planning, then the developer is required to contribute to the cost of the works.

Sewerage Services

Goulburn Valley Water (GVW) is the responsible sewerage authority.

GVW has advised it generally has good capacity for servicing the growth areas of Nathalia. Given that the identified growth areas are within the Nathalia Development Plan, the comments in Development Plan have been referred to in this section.

Servicing of the growth areas can generally be achieved through the extension of existing gravity sewerage mains and via the construction of new sewerage pump stations, rising mains and gravity reticulation mains. The cost of new works must be in accordance with the statutory guidelines of the Essential Services Commission (ESC) and is to be funded at the cost of the developer and/or GVW.

Generally, the developer must fully fund non-shared reticulation assets within a developer's landholding that are 225mm or less in diameter. Larger trunk mains or shared distribution assets are to be fully funded by GVW or otherwise by agreement between GV Water and the developer(s) with ESC consent.

Similar to water assets, there is a formula that applies to the funding of shared distribution assets whereby in the event that the said asset is not reasonably expected to be funded within GVW's financial forward planning, then the developer is required to contribute to the cost of the works.

Drainage

The Moira Shire Council is the responsible drainage authority for Nathalia, and the Broken Creek is the receiver of water for stormwater runoff. Stormwater generally discharges into the creek via a series of existing and proposed retarding basins, wetlands, pump stations, rising mains, underground piped and open stormwater outfall drains.

Moira Shire prefer stormwater drainage works to be designed to accord with the current best practice principles contained in "Urban Stormwater Best Practice Environmental Guidelines, CSRIO 1999", therefore the post construction performance objective of the drainage system is to achieve:

- 80% retention of the typical urban load of suspended solids,
- 45% retention of the typical urban load of total phosphorus,
- 45% retention of the typical urban load of total nitrogen, and
- 70% retention of the typical urban load of litter.

Flows need to be retarded such that they do not exceed the predevelopment discharge that would result from a storm having an average recurrence interval of once every 1.5 years. Moira Shire will also require retardation to cater for the 1 in 100 year event.

During the constructions phase the development must also accord with the performance objectives of limiting and preventing sediment, litter and other pollutants from entering the receiving waters.

The developer(s) borne the costs for drainage works including water quality improvement and retardation.

Electricity

Powercor Australia Ltd is the network service provider for Nathalia. At this stage Powercor has elected to comment on the draft Strategy Plan, so comments received from Powercor during the preparation of the Nathalia Development Plan have been referred to in this section.

In the event that the existing high voltage lines need reconductoring or extending as a consequence of a detailed assessment of the loading demands within the study area, Powercor's current policies dictate this work generally be completed at Powercor's cost, but developers should confirm specific requirements and conditions by formal application to Powercor.

For residential growth area the usual strategy of high voltage underground cable extensions to substations sited as appropriate throughout the development with low voltage domestic underground cable reticulation to the lots would apply.

In relation to development costs, current policy conforms to the statutory requirement for Powercor to allow construction to be carried out comprising a mix of non-competitive works (i.e. works to be done by the Network service provider) and competitive works (i.e. works to be done by accredited contractors). Powercor will provide a fee offer and procedural conditions upon formal application.

Telecommunications

Telstra is the network service provider for Nathalia, and it too has advised it will comment on the specific of the draft Strategy Plan during exhibition period.

During the preparation of the Nathalia Development Plan, Telstra advised that it has a statutory responsibility to provide a network service for telecommunications, including broadband) to the respective property boundaries of the sites within Nathalia. The usual developer shared trenching conditions would apply within the proposed development (i.e. developer to fund shared trenching).

The need or otherwise to upgrade their network assets would be investigated in detail at the time of application for a planning permit.

3.7 Town Entrances/Rural Surrounds

Town entrances are important to many rural and regional communities, including Nathalia. Sprawling development along highways often results in unappealing entrances to towns. Nathalia is located on the Murray Valley Highway, which traverses the town centre. It is important that the town entrances are configured to take advantage of future possibilities and provide good urban design that will create a good first impression of a town and community. The first impression of a town can promote visitation for travellers. The entrances to Nathalia require careful planning, in conjunction with future development.

The rural / agricultural sectors are a vital component of the economic and employment base of Nathalia. This Strategy Plan promotes the agricultural use of the land and seeks to ensure that potential conflict at the rural/urban interface is minimised by reviewing the future growth boundary for the township. This enables the owners of agricultural properties within the future growth boundary to make farming infrastructure investment decisions with greater certainty.

4 Residential Land Use and Development

4.1 Existing Context

Nathalia's residential areas have historically developed around the town centre and alongside the attractive environs of the Broken Creek which bisects the town.

The majority of existing residential land within the town is of a standard residential subdivision size and included within the Residential I Zone. The residential allotments are generally 800m² to 1,200m². Since 2005, two medium density housing developments have been approved, containing a total of seven new dwellings. This was through the redevelopment of existing allotments in and near the town centre. Further to this, twenty three independent dwellings for people over the age of 55 have been approved.

The 2003 Nathalia Structure Plan provides for a growth area to the west of the town centre. The Moira Shire Council has been proactive in commissioning the preparation of a development plan for the land located in this growth area so as to effectively guide and co-ordinate future residential development (refer Section 4.2 below). The development plan area comprises approximately 35 hectares of land. Two options that set aside land for the existing irrigation channel, a nursery, a church, a new hospital (recently approved by Moira Shire Council) and public open space were identified:

- Option A comprises approximately 25 hectares of net developable area; and
- Option B indicates a net developable area of 26 hectares.

Land to the east of the town centre and Broken Creek is generally contained within the Low Density Residential Zone. Lots vary in size and are generally between 0.4hectares and 6hectares. For the most part, this land is heavily flood constrained and the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority has indicated that there are a limited number of new lots that can be created in this area.

The 2003 Nathalia Structure Plan also identified other areas within the Farming Zone to the north-west and south-west of the town centre for possible rural living opportunities. Through the re-alignment of title boundaries, some land to the south-west of Nathalia has recently been developed with rural residential lifestyle type lots.

4.2 Previous Studies

Two studies have been undertaken in recent years in regard to residential land supply and development. These are described below.

Nathalia Development Plan, September 2006

In March 2007 the Moira Shire Council adopted the Development Plan Report for Numurkah, Nathalia, Cobram and Yarrawonga prepared by EarthTech and TTM Consulting. The Development Plan Report was prepared in consultation with landowners, the Council and service authorities. Workshops were conducted in December 2005 and public exhibition in April 2006.

The study area for the Nathalia Development Plan was approximately 35 hectares of land to the west of the town centre, primarily within the Residential I Zone and small portion to the south within the Farming Zone. All of the land is also covered by the Development Plan Overlay Schedule I.

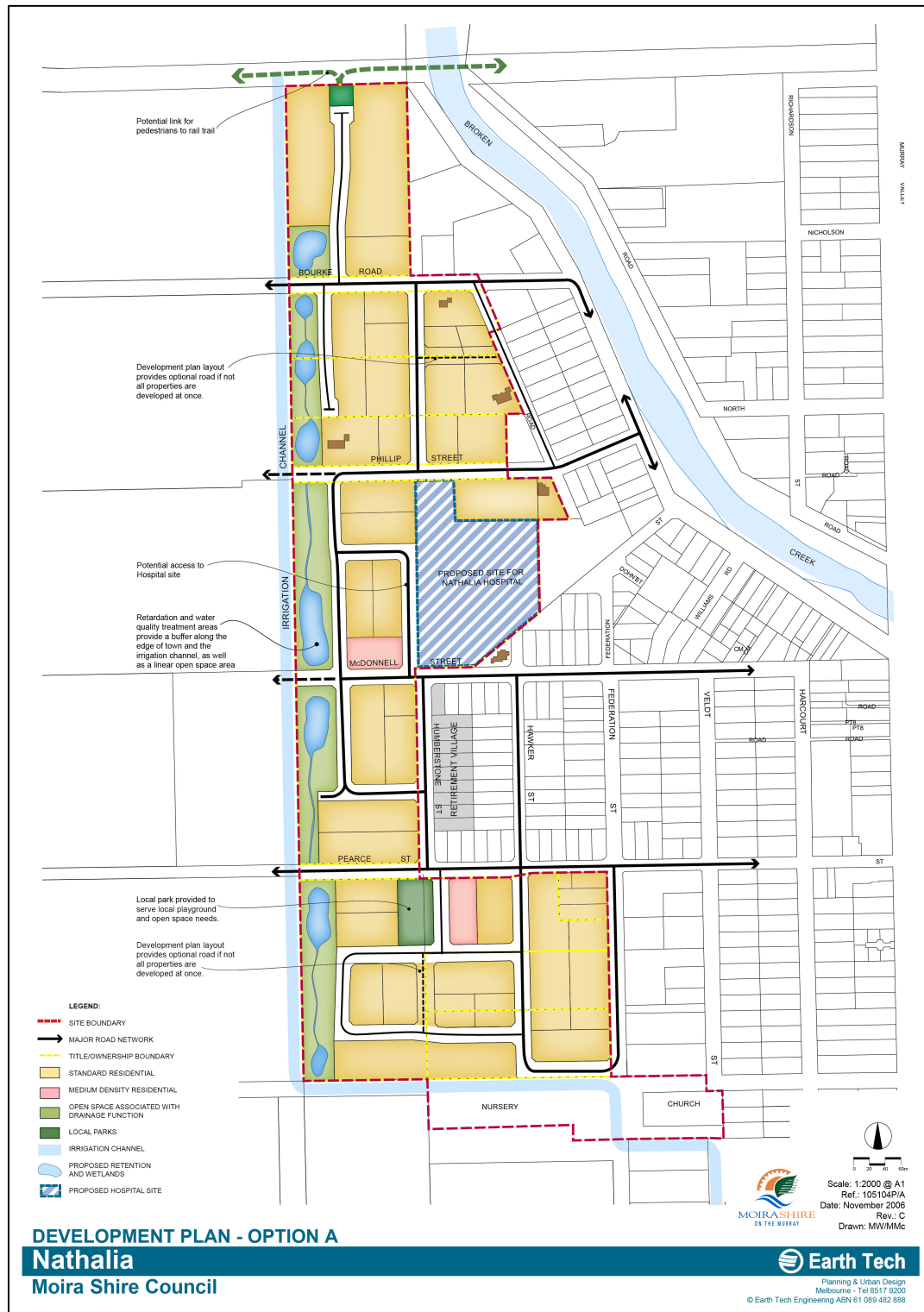
The Development Plan Report estimates that there is currently approximately a 50 year residential supply of land for Nathalia with all of it within the study area. State Planning Policy requires minimum 10 year supply of residential land. The report found that there is a significant over supply of land and that therefore it was not warranted to identify future residential development directions.

A significant issue that arose during the preparation of the Nathalia Development Plan was the need for an additional north-south road route.

The report offered two options for the provision of drainage and water quality infrastructure (refer Figures 5a and 5b). Option A provides public open space and drainage retention along the west of the development plan area; whereas Option B offers open space and drainage to the south of the development plan area. Each of the two options provides for a grid street design. The Moira Shire Council's preference is for Option B.

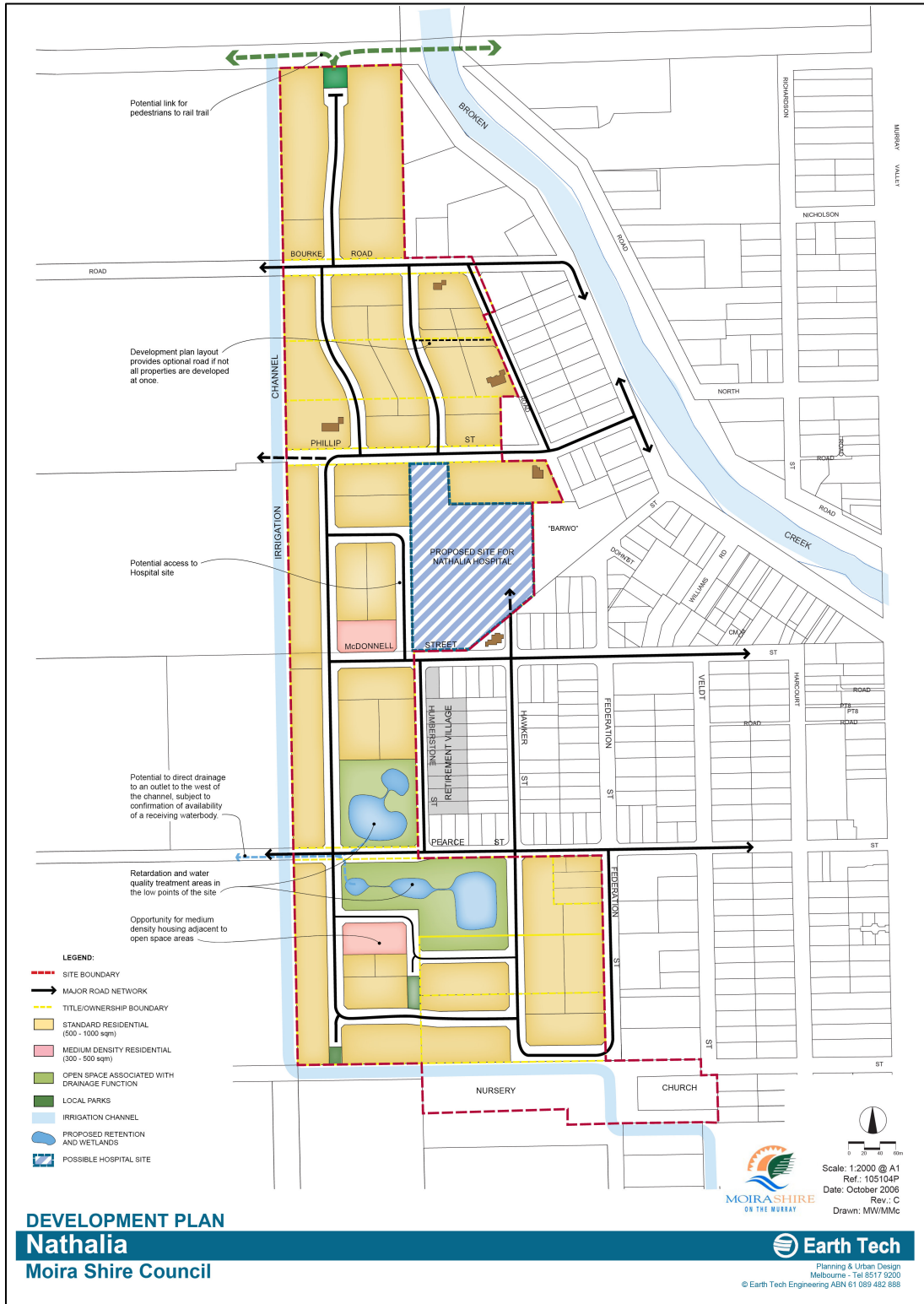
Given that this study is relatively recent, and its findings have been supported and accepted by the Moira Shire Council and the community, the Strategy Plan will rely upon its findings and recommendations.

Figure 5a: Nathalia Development Plan – Option A



Source: Nathalia Development Plan, Earth Tech, 2006

Figure 5b: Nathalia Development Plan – Option B



Source: Nathalia Development Plan, Earth Tech, 2006

Rural Living Strategy for Moira Shire, June 2004

O'Neil Pollock & Associates Pty Ltd was appointed by the Moira Shire Council to undertake a Rural Living Strategy for the Moira Shire. Stage I of the report was finalised in June 2004 and included a review of Nathalia, Cobram, Numurkah, Yarrawonga, Bundalong, Barmah and surrounds. The recommendations of the Stage I report include:

- *Based on demand/supply analysis undertaken it is recommended that no additional land is required to be rezoned in or around Nathalia to accommodate its 10 year forecast demand in rural residential development.*

These findings were generally supported by the Moira Shire Council, particularly as land to the west of Nathalia is encouraged to be developed at a variety of densities, including low density development.

4.3 Population Change

4.3.1 1986 to 2006

According to the 2006 Census of Population and Housing the population of Nathalia in 2006 was 1,376 persons, representing over 5% of the municipality's total population.

Although, the population of the Moira Shire has gradually increased over time, this trend is not reflected in Nathalia where the population has declined over the last two Census periods.

Table 1: Population Change, 1986 to 2006

	Nathalia	% Change p.a.	% of Moira	% Chg in Moira p.a.
1986	1,346			
1991	1,470	1.8		
1996	1,455	-0.2		
2001	1416	-0.5	5.5	
2006	1,376	-0.6	5.1	0.9

Source: DSE Towns in Time 2006, ABS 2006 Census and Moira Community profile (profile.id)

In 2006, Nathalia was the fourth largest town within the Moira Shire after Yarrawonga, Cobram and Numurkah. The following table (Table 2) shows the comparison between the other major towns within the municipality.

Table 2: Population Change in Main Towns, 1981 to 2006

	Nathalia	Yarrawonga	Cobram	Numurkah
1981	1,270	3,594	3,901	2,720
1986	1,346	3,618	3,732	2,847
1991	1,470	3,976	3,946	3,140
1996	1,455	4,199	4,145	3,142
2001	1,416	4,592	4,639	3,404
2006	1,376	5,591	4,980	3,636

Source: DSE Towns in Time 2006

Of the four largest towns within the Moira Shire, Nathalia was the only town to decrease in population between 1996 and 2006 (5.4%).

4.4 Age Structure

4.4.1 1986 to 2006

The age structure of Nathalia (1986 to 2006) is indicated in the table below. It has been compared to the age structure of the municipality and regional Victoria in 2006.

Table 3: Age Structure, 1986 to 2006

Age Cohort	Nathalia					Moira	Reg Vic
	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006	2006	2006
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
0-4	8.7	7.9	4.9	5.8	5.8	6.0	6.1
5-17	18.6	19.7	20.4	17.8	14.7	18.8	18.9
18-24	7.8	6.7	5.4	6.8	7.3	6.4	7.9
25-34	13.6	13.4	13.7	8.9	8.2	9.4	10.6
35-49	17.3	15.9	19.5	17.5	16.2	20.2	21.3
50-59	11.7	11.2	9.1	10.9	15.0	13.6	13.8
60+*	22.2	25.1	29.9	32.3	33.5	25.6	21.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100.0

Source: DSE Towns in Time 2006, ABS Census data 2006 & DSE Know Your Area

* Due to ABS changing groupings, it is not possible for further breakdown of the population aged 60 and over and at the same time allow comparisons to be made at the Shire and regional level.

- In 2006 the age group with the highest proportion of Nathalia's population was 60+ with 34%, followed by the 35-49 cohorts with 16%.

- The attractiveness of Nathalia physical environment and lifestyle opportunities to retirees and an ageing population have seen the 50 years and over age cohort's increase from 34% of the Nathalia's population in 1986 to 48.5% in 2006.
- This is notably higher than the average for regional Victoria (35%) and the municipality (39%). This cohort has increased steadily over the last ten years.

4.4.2 Forecasts 2006 to 2031

Whilst age structure projections are not available specifically for Nathalia, the projections for Moira Shire based on 2001 data (as per the table below) indicate that it is expected that this trend towards an older population will continue. Like Moira, when compared to 2001, Nathalia's population is expected to have a higher proportion of those aged over 50 years by 2031, with much of the population growth coming from increases in this age cohort, through ageing and migration.

Table 4: Forecast for Age Structure, 2001 to 2031

Age Cohort	Moira					Reg Vic
	2006 %	2011 %	2016 %	2021 %	2026 %	2026 %
0-4	6.0	5.2	5.0	4.9	4.8	5.5
5-14	14.2	13.0	11.6	11.5	10.5	12.0
15-24	11.2	11.7	11.0	10.2	9.0	11.0
25-34	9.9	9.0	9.6	9.9	9.4	10.3
35-49	20.2	19.5	18.0	16.8	16.7	17.6
50-59	13.5	13.5	13.8	13.7	13.2	12.4
60-69	11.5	13.3	14.5	14.7	15.2	13.3
70-84	11.4	12.3	13.5	15.8	17.4	14.6
85+	2.2	2.5	3.0	3.3	3.8	3.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: DSE, *Victoria in Future 2008*

A major issue for planning for housing for this group is the desire for many people to stay at home for as long as possible, with the benefit of Home and Community Care programs. This is particularly applicable to those people from remote areas and retired farmers, who wish to remain in familiar areas.

There will be a range of people in this age group, from early retirees that are fully independent and may combine part time work with leisure activities, to elderly people who are fully supported. Subsequently the housing and community facility demands of these sub groups will differ and may include:

- Independent living units
- Retirement villages, which may be co-located with supported living dwellings
- Serviced apartments
- Supported residential units
- Residential aged care

There is likely to be demand for medium density of 1-2 bedroom stock, smaller lots with manageable gardens, in both the private and public housing markets. Such housing should be provided in proximity to services and other residents, to encourage social interaction and easy access in the event of emergencies. Physically these dwellings should be flexible in terms of occupant use, contain ramps and have minimum changes in levels.

4.5 Number of Dwellings and Household Size

4.5.1 1986 to 2006

Since 1986 to 2006 the number of dwellings in Nathalia increased by 134, representing an average of 7 per year.

Consistent with national trends, household size continues to decline within Nathalia, and the Moira Shire, as the number of dwellings continues to increase. The number of one and two person households increased considerably to represent 73% of all households in Nathalia in 2006, with the converse trend experienced by the four and five or more person households which declined from 30% of dwellings in 1986 to 16% in 2006.

Table 5: Household Occupancy Rates, 1986 to 2006

Persons per h/h	Nathalia ^a					Moira	Reg Vic
	1986 %	1991 %	1996 %	2001 %	2006 %	2006 %	2006 %
1	28	29	30	34	34	26	26
2	32	34	36	36	39	39	36
3	13	11	12	13	11	12	14
4	14	14	12	11	9	12	14
5 or more	12	12	11	7	7	11	10
Total No. Dwellings	555	638	642	662	689	10,133	498,361

Source: DSE Know Your Area and ABS 2006, adapted from Towns in Time 2006

4.5.2 Forecasts 2006 to 2031

In 2006 there was an average of 2.17 persons per household in Nathalia. For the Moira Shire, *Victoria in Future 2004* (DSE) estimates indicate a decrease in this number as per the table below.

Table 6: Forecast Household Occupancy Rates, 2001 to 2006

	Moira						Reg Vic
	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021	2031	2031
Persons per h/hold	2.49	2.40	2.31	2.22	2.15	2.01	2.15

Source: DSE, *Victoria in Future 2004*

There has been an ongoing gradual reduction in household occupancy rates which is forecast to decrease to 2.01 persons per household by 2031 for the Moira Shire. This will create a high demand for a different form of housing from the typical detached family home that predominates in Nathalia. More households will be one or two person households, as a consequence of an ageing population, and young people moving to larger towns and cities to work or study. Home ownership for a sole person is often more difficult in terms of affordability.

Housing strategies for residential areas should identify areas suitable for the development of medium density housing and the potential for subdivision or conversions of older housing and industrial buildings, especially those within close proximity to the town centre.

4.6 Affordability and Tenure

House prices within the Moira Shire have increased since 2002 as indicated in the table below:

Table 7: Median House Price, 2002 to 2006

Median Price	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
House	\$130,000	\$155,000	\$174,500	\$185,000	\$195,000
Unit/apartment	\$105,000	\$135,000	\$151,000	\$182,500	\$175,000
Vacant block	\$40,000	\$52,260	\$57,000	\$63,000	\$69,600
No. house sales	563	526	464	467	220

Source: DSE, *Know Your Area, 2004* (based on *Valuer General Victoria, A Guide to Property Values, 2005*.)

It should be noted, 2006 data is not yet available and the above statistics are preliminary only. Of the 689 private dwellings in Nathalia in 2006, 611 of the dwellings were occupied and approximately 27% were being purchased and 47% fully owned.

In 2006, Nathalia also had relatively low proportions of public housing (4% of all dwellings in Nathalia) and high proportions of privately rented housing (15%) compared to the regional Victorian averages of 3% and 19.4% respectively (ABS Census 2006).

Table 8: Median House Price, 2003 to 2007 for Nathalia

Median Price	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Property Sales	\$89,000	\$120,000	\$131,000	\$150,000	\$140,000
No. property sales	83	65	77	70	68

Source: Moira Shire Council, Sales Figures.

Note: No. house sales also includes the sale of vacant blocks & unit/apartment.

Note: Table excludes sales with a value of \$0.00.

4.7 Dwelling Numbers and Dwelling Approvals

4.7.1 Dwelling Numbers 1986 to 2006

The number of existing private dwellings in Nathalia increased from 555 in 1986 to 689 dwellings in 2006 (DSE, *Towns in Time 2006*). This represents an overall increase of 134 dwellings, an average of 7 dwellings per year.

4.7.2 Dwelling Approvals 2000 to 2007

An insight into population growth may also be obtained through analysis of the information on building approvals for new dwellings. Since 2000 the number of new dwellings approvals for Nathalia, and in comparison to the other major towns in the municipality, is shown in Table 9.

The average number of dwelling approvals in Nathalia from 2000 – 2009 was 6 new dwellings per year.

Table 9: New Dwelling Approvals in Main Towns, 2000 to 2006

	Nathalia	Cobram	Yarrawonga	Numurkah
2000	7	35	66	26
2001	3	22	53	42
2002	4	27	103	30
2003	4	29	133	42
2004	13	45	149	39
2005	10	48	139	60
2006	3	38	129	33
2007	6	37	83	24
2008	7	22	90	25
2009	2	37	93	24

Source: Moira Shire Council Building Approvals Database, 2000-2009

4.7.3 Forecasts 2006 to 2031

Different scenarios have been explored in Table 10 below at various levels of dwellings per annum.

Table 10: Scenarios for New Dwelling Numbers, 2001 to 2031 for Nathalia

	7 dwellings pa	10 dwellings pa
2006	689	689
2011	724	739
2016	759	789
2021	794	839
2026	829	889
2031	864	939

Source: Estimates by CPG Australia, 2008

4.8 Residential Land Demand and Supply

4.8.1 Demand

As demonstrated in Tables 1 and 2 above, the population of Nathalia has been recorded to be in decline since 1996. Nevertheless, on average, seven new dwellings have been constructed each year from 2000 - 2006. These figures suggest that though there is some demand for land suitable for residential purposes, it is unlikely to increase significantly in the short-long term.

4.8.2 Supply

Nathalia contains a significant quantity of undeveloped residential land – approximately 35 hectares within the Residential 1 Zone to the west of the town centre.

As noted in Section 4.2, both the Nathalia Development Plan (2006) and Moira Rural Living Strategy (2004) found that the existing supply of residential land within the town exceeds anticipated demand for in excess of 10 years, as required by Clause 14.01-2 of the Moira Planning Scheme.

Consultation undertaken in the preparation of the Rural Living Strategy identified a need for a greater supply of allotments in the order of 0.4 hectares (1 acre) and larger. This finding should be considered in long term planning for the township.

4.9 Physical Infrastructure and Servicing

Water Supply

Goulburn Valley Water (GVW) is the responsible water supply authority. GVW has advised it generally has good capacity for servicing the proposed residential growth areas which have been identified in the Nathalia Development Plan.

Sewerage Services

Goulburn Valley Water (GVW) is the responsible sewerage authority. GVW has advised it generally has good capacity for servicing the proposed residential growth areas which have been identified in the Nathalia Development Plan.

Drainage

The Moira Shire Council is the responsible drainage authority for Nathalia. The location for retarding basins within the Development Plan is subject to further investigations and detailed design. The developer(s) bear the costs for drainage works including water quality improvement and retardation.

Electricity

Powercor Australia Ltd is the network service provider for Nathalia. At this stage Powercor has elected to comment on the draft Strategy Plan. Powercor provided comments during the preparation of the Nathalia Development Plan.

In the event that the existing high voltage lines need reconductoring or extending as a consequence of a detailed assessment of the loading demands within the study area, Powercor's current policies dictate this work generally be completed at Powercor's cost, but developers should confirm specific requirements and conditions by formal application to Powercor.

Telecommunications

Telstra is the network service provider for Nathalia, and it has advised it will comment on the specific of the draft Strategy Plan during exhibition period.

During the preparation of the Nathalia Development Plan, Telstra advised that it has a statutory responsibility to provide a network service for telecommunications, including broadband) to the respective property boundaries of the land within Nathalia.

4.10 Residential Land Strategy

Significant levels of State and Local policy exist in relation to residential development and housing. In particular, contemporary planning policy encourages urban consolidation in order to utilise infrastructure more efficiently and locate residences in close proximity to a range of community, commercial and recreational facilities.

A diversity of housing choice is also strongly encouraged at both State and local level. This Strategy Plan provides for choice, diversity and opportunities for growth in all housing/residential sectors, including:

- Infill urban consolidation
- Conventional residential
- Lifestyle/low density residential
- Affordable housing
- Rural residential

For the past ten years or so, governments have adopted urban consolidation as their predominant planning and economic philosophy, including the encouragement of higher density infill residential development in close proximity to transport (particularly public transport) and activity centres.

For Nathalia to grow in a sustainable fashion, future residential development should incorporate a mix of infill development and residential expansion. Urban consolidation within in existing residentially zoned areas is strongly encouraged within this Strategy Plan.

Housing within the Moira Shire is generally characterised by single dwellings on residential lots. The majority of residential allotments in Nathalia are within the 800m² to 1,200m² range. In order to encourage the principles of urban consolidation, it may be appropriate for the majority of residential allotments to have an average lot size of 800m² in the future.

As discussed in Section 4.8, the existing supply of residential land within Nathalia is expected to cater to demand within the short-long term.

Nevertheless, it is appropriate to identify areas for future growth to ensure that any change in forecast demand can be appropriately accommodated.

It is recommended that areas proposed for future long term residential development or redevelopment within this Strategy Plan be subject to the preparation of a Development Plan which will require any future residential development to be strategically justified (in terms of both supply and demand) to ensure that residential development within Nathalia is facilitated in an orderly manner in accordance with the objectives of this Strategy Plan.

The Strategy Plan (Figure 7) demonstrates future residential growth areas for Nathalia. These areas have been informed by the following:

- State and local planning policy;
- Development opportunities and constraints as they apply to the urban areas and surrounding environs; and
- Forecast supply and demand of residential land.

In the short to medium term, residential expansion within Nathalia is focussed upon the west of the township within the existing residentially zoned land, for which a development plan has been prepared. It is also noted that opportunities are likely to

exist to redevelop under-utilised sites within established areas, especially for medium density residential development.

The strategic justification for the majority of residential expansion to the west of the township includes:

- The land is already zoned Residential I and a Development Plan has been prepared for this land.
- The need to protect existing and future industrial precincts to the north and south east of the town centre;
- Existing and proposed infrastructure and services have been planned for in the west growth corridor.
- The land is not prone to flooding.

4.10.1 Medium Density Residential

Future residential development should encompass a sustainable mix of housing density, including medium density development. Such densities should be provided for through a mix of infill development and within suitable locations.

As stated in the Nathalia Development Plan, being located adjacent to open spaces provides these lots with added amenity. Ideally these lots should 'front' the open space to provide the added benefit of passive surveillance.

4.10.2 Conventional Residential Development

Conventional or standard residential development is generally focussed on the existing zoned Residential I land to west of Nathalia in the short to medium term, and to identify long term residential land further south. The land identified for long term should not be rezoned until such time that a detailed demand and supply analysis has indicated the land is required as part of Nathalia's 10year residential supply. Land to the immediate west is readily serviced by reticulated services and two options for a development plan are in place which allow for the linking of existing and future residential areas through a well planned movement network comprising clear hierarchy of roads, open space and linear links.

4.10.3 Low Density/Lifestyle Residential Development

Whilst there is an area of low density/lifestyle residential development to the east of Nathalia, much of the land to the east is flood constrained. In accordance with the existing Nathalia Structure Plan, the Farming zoned land to the south west of Nathalia is currently undergoing boundary realignments and subdivision to also cater for market demand for larger allotments. This suggests there is a greater demand for such allotments than currently supplied by the market. Given that Nathalia has over 50years supply of zoned residential land it proposed to provide some opportunities for larger lots to the west of Nathalia within the existing Residential I Zone land.

4.10.4 Affordable Housing

All development and redevelopment of land for residential purposes should consider the provision of affordable housing.

4.10.5 Rural Living

Rural living on larger allotments (generally greater than 2 hectares in area) is a recognised and legitimate land use. Existing rural residential allotments are located throughout the municipality. The Rural Living Strategy for the Moura Shire indicated no additional land is required to be rezoned to accommodate Nathalia's 10year forecast for rural living development.

These findings were generally supported by the Moira Shire Council, particularly as land to the west of Nathalia is encouraged to be developed at a variety of densities, including low density development.

4.10.6 Release of Land

In relation to nominated residential growth areas, it is acknowledged that the market has a role to play in the release and development of land, and as such an unqualified and rigid implementation of the Strategy Plan may unreasonably restrict land supply and impact upon both housing choice and affordability.

Accordingly, it is recommended that Council consider supporting proposals for the release and development of land within nominated residential growth areas that diverge from the specified implementation timeframes where:

- The Nathalia Strategy Plan has been adopted and referenced in the Moira Planning Scheme;
- The site is contained wholly within a nominated growth area on the Nathalia Strategy Plan;
- A Development Plan applying to the whole of the site has been prepared to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority; and
- The proponent can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority that the proposal will enhance the choice of available allotment sizes, housing opportunities and dwelling types within Nathalia.

4.11 Summary and Recommendations

Overall, the strategies of the current Nathalia Structure Plan and the policies in Clause 21.04-4 have provided Nathalia with a sound planning base. This Strategy Plan endorses many of these policies and strategies, and includes some minor changes to reflect aspects



such as greater provision of choice in housing diversity and type and the outcomes and recommendations of recent studies undertaken by the Moira Shire Council.

The main changes to the existing Nathalia Structure Plan in regard to residential growth include: promotion of consolidation and a variety of densities within the existing residential area; the designation of land previously allocated for rural living for medium-term residential development; and identification of areas for long term future growth as required.

The following strategies are recommended for residential land use and development:

- Consolidation and development at a variety of densities is encouraged within the existing residential areas.
- Short and medium term residential development will be directed to land already zoned for residential purposes (as justified above).
- Future long-term residential development should be directed to the south peripheries of the town.
- Encourage new development and the redevelopment of land to consider the provision of affordable housing.
- All zoned yet undeveloped residential land and areas identified for short, medium and long term residential (conventional and low density) should be included in a Development Plan Overlay to ensure their orderly development and co-ordinated provision of infrastructure, community services and facilities.
- Low density residential development will be directed to the east of the town, within the area already zoned Low Density Residential, and within the existing Residential I Zone land to the west.

Further details on implementation are included in Section 11 of this Report.

5 Commercial and Retail

5.1 Existing Context

The commercial and retail opportunities within Nathalia are typical of a small country town, with strip shopping on both sides of the main street, being the Murray Valley Highway (Blake Street).

The town centre contains a mix of retail outlets and other services such as commercial, professional, entertainment and health. It is relatively consolidated; and comments received during the consultation process highlighted a need to maintain the consolidation of the centre whilst providing a central focal/gathering place. The wide median and country ambience also contribute to its success as a place of business and community interaction.

The 2006 Census of Population and Housing recorded the following industry sectors as employing the majority of Nathalia's workforce:

Table 11: Employment by Industry, 2006

Sector	% Nathalia	% Moira	% Reg Vic
Manufacturing	18	17	13
Health & comm services	15	8	11
Retail Trade	14	12	15
Education	11	5	8
Agriculture	6	25	11
Sub-total	64	67	58

The high proportion of persons employed in the manufacturing sector in Nathalia is most likely due to the widespread agricultural industries in the area; particularly from surrounding crop, sheep and dairy operations. The high portions of people working in the health and education sectors are reflective of the hospital and large number of schools within Nathalia.

Commercial and retail land within the town is currently included within the Business 1 Zone.

5.2 Previous Studies

Economic Development Strategy 2008-2013, July 2008

The Regional Development Company in association with Shaw & Associates Consulting has developed an Economic Development Strategy to guide development in the Moira Shire Council.

The Strategy identified the following sectors as being the drivers for the Shire's economy:

- Value added processing to meat and dairy products;
- Agriculture;
- Construction;
- Tourism;
- Property and business services;
- Wholesale and retail trade;
- Other food manufacturing; and
- Transport and storage.

A consultation process was conducted in the development of the Strategy and the following opportunities were identified for Nathalia:

- Revitalise Nathalia Tourism Inc to make it viable;
- Build on Nathalia's sport events and festivals:
- Arts talent showcase at Christmas using artists in town;
- Consolidate businesses in a new industrial estate freeing up main street land;
- Develop a cultural precinct;
- Develop strategies to promote and build on the footy club's success and profile in the in the area;
- Attract / train tradespeople using older retirees etc to train apprentices / mentor;
- Hospital development link with local tradespeople;
- Investigate education and training opportunities in TAFE, Arts to attract and retain families;
- New residential precinct developed to attract new residents;
- Highlight points of difference e.g. central location to Echuca, Cobram, Yarrawonga, Shepparton;
- Supply natural gas to Nathalia;
- Tap into Bendigo Bank's community support fund for opportunities in Nathalia;
- Revitalise the Heritage Centre Barmah Forest Preservation League; and
- Make more use of Barmah Forest for tourism.

5.3 Commercial Land Demand and Supply

Nathalia has an established role as a service centre for retailing, education and other activities, but there is increasing competition from nearby towns such as Numurkah, Cobram, Echuca and Shepparton.

If Nathalia is to maintain its role, there is a need to emphasise its opportunities as a location for entertainment and tourism and as the location for higher-order professional and community services and the like. The provision of an appropriate range of retail, entertainment and tourist facilities, as well as other higher-order services (such as health,



legal, accounting, etc) has the potential to generate increased spending by residents and visitors.

The use of existing vacant shops in the Nathalia town centre should be encouraged to ensure a vibrant commercial centre. There is no indication that there will be a high demand in the future for additional commercial land; therefore it is considered that the use of existing vacant buildings and the relocation of some non-commercial uses from business zoned land should ensure sufficient land supply for commercial/business uses.

5.4 Commercial Land Strategy

The Nathalia town centre should consolidate its focus on intensifying its retail and business activities for daily and weekly shopping and tourism. Restaurants and cafés should be encouraged to service locals and visitors.

The existing vacant retail/business premises and relocation of some non-commercial uses will ensure there is a sufficient commercial land supply within the town centre.

5.5 Summary and Recommendations

The following settlement strategies are recommended for commercial/business land use and development in Nathalia:

- Maintain the compact nature of the Nathalia town centre to intensify retail and commercial uses;
- Utilise existing vacant premises;

Further details on implementation are included in Section II of this Report.

6 Industrial Land Use and Development

6.1 Existing Context

The industrial opportunities for Nathalia are located to the north of the township, on the either side of the Murray Valley Highway. This land is zoned Industrial 1 and Industrial 3 and comprises an area of approximately 23.8 hectares.

The industrial area generally comprises agricultural and other light to medium scale industries. It includes a new industrial estate at O'Malley Court. The vacant industrial lots within the area have been sold for development purposes.

The Nathalia industrial area generally abuts residential land to the south and rural land to the north, east and west. Much of this rural land is highly affected by flooding.

As illustrated in Table 11, a high proportion of Nathalia residents are employed in the manufacturing sector. Nathalia's strengths in this area are most likely due to the prevalence of agricultural processing industries. This strong manufacturing base is valuable in providing employment to younger people who may otherwise leave Nathalia to seek employment opportunities in larger towns and cities.

6.2 Previous Studies

Moira Industrial Land Review, 2004

Maunsell Australia Pty Ltd conducted a review of the supply and demand for industrial land within the Moira Shire, including Nathalia. In regard to industrial land, the report made a recommendation to rezone the Farming Zone land to the south west of the existing industrial precinct on the western side of the highway to the Industrial 1 Zone. It also recommended that the land to the north-west be identified as future greenfield industrial land.

Industrial Zones Review Revisited, 2007

In August 2007, Moira Shire Council conducted a review of Maunsell's findings regarding industrial land in the four major towns in Moira Shire Council, including Nathalia.

The review found that there is greater demand for industrial land in Nathalia than originally perceived; and identified the land to the south of Nathalia, at the south-west corner of the Murray Valley Highway and Dillons Lane (Boaden Street) for use as a future industrial estate.

Moira Shire Council Rail Corridor – Strategic Planning Report, 2007

Coomes Consulting Group was appointed by VicTrack to prepare a Strategic Rail Corridor Plan for all railway land within the Moira Shire Council. VicTrack owns and leases land along Railway Street, Nathalia. Some of this land is within the Industrial 1 Zone and is currently being used for industrial purposes. One parcel has been sold, with



Audit of Industrial Land in Provincial Victoria 2007

In 2007, Parson Brinckerhoff was appointed by the Department of Planning and Community Development, the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development and Regional Development Victoria to undertake an audit of all industrial land in regional Victoria.

This audit found that there are 23.8 hectares of industrial land in Nathalia, with five lots currently vacant. It identified an area of land with rezoning potential to the north-west of the township, opposite the existing Industrial 1 zoned land in Draper Street.

Economic Development Strategy 2008-2013, July 2008

The Regional Development Company in association with Shaw & Associates Consulting has developed an Economic Development Strategy to guide development in the Moira Shire Council. An objective in the strategy is:

“To ensure adequate serviced industrial land for current and future demands (as required.)”

6.3 Industrial Land Demand and Supply

Nathalia has an established industrial precinct to the north of the town, with approximately five lots currently vacant. The Audit of Industrial Land indicates that four of the vacant lots vary in size from 0.1 hectare to 1 hectare in area and one lot is larger than 1 hectare in area.

As shown on the Land Subject to Inundation and Floodway Overlay map, there is an area of land adjacent to the industrial precinct – to the east and west – that is not constrained by flooding. These areas can provide for the growth of the existing industrial precinct.

The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority and the Moira Shire Council have recently raised the height of the existing levees and construct some new levees on the Farming Zoned land to the west of the Industrial Precinct. The impact of any new levee bank on flooding in this area will need to be reflected in a future planning scheme amendment.

Previous studies indicate that there is not a high demand for further industrial land in the short term; however consultation with the Nathalia community and the Nathalia Economic Development Committee has indicated that there is demand for more industrial land, both for existing industry and especially to encourage new industry and businesses to the town.

The consultation process for this Strategy Plan identified seven businesses in Nathalia and one in Shepparton that were investigating possible expansion and/or relocation within/to Nathalia. These businesses were contacted to identify their specific needs and to ascertain the demand for further industrial land. In summary:

- All businesses are small in scale varying from 1 to 10 employees.

- In general the businesses are looking to increase the number of employees over the next 2 years by 1 - 4 employees.
- The businesses are generally located on small parcels of land varying from 0.1 hectare up to 1.3hectares.
- Many of the businesses have recently expanded or have plans to expand at their current location and are generally at capacity. Some of businesses indicated that it would have been preferable to relocate, however suitable industrial land is not available.
- Given that many businesses are expanding on existing sites it is difficult for these businesses to determine when and if they will need to relocate in future. The businesses that provided timeframes varied from 1-3 years to 10 years.
- The businesses generally require 0.4hectares to 4hectares in area, highway frontage, easy truck access, flood free land and good water supply.
- The Shepparton business would consider establishing in Nathalia in the next 2 - 3 years if suitable land was available at 25-30% of Shepparton industrial land prices.

Given these findings, it is considered appropriate to encourage the consolidation and incremental expansion of the existing industrial precinct to cater for the short term demand, particularly for small to medium sized businesses. Longer term needs and demand driven from larger businesses will need to be catered for elsewhere due to flooding constraints surrounding existing industrial precinct.

6.4 Physical Infrastructure and Servicing

Water Supply

GVW has advised it generally has good capacity for servicing the existing industrial area to the north of town. However anecdotal advice suggests that within the existing industrial areas there are difficulties with the supply of water to allow businesses to accord with regulations for fire fighting purposes.

Any additional servicing can be achieved by the construction of water reticulation main extensions by connecting to the existing assets.

Sewerage Services

GVW has advised it generally has good capacity for servicing the existing industrial areas. Any extension to servicing can be achieved in part by extensions to their existing gravity sewerage reticulation mains and if necessary, in part via the construction of new sewage pumping stations, rising mains and gravity reticulation mains.

Drainage

Any new industrial development will need to be drained in accordance with Councils requirements. The developer(s) borne the costs for drainage works including water quality improvement and retardation.

Electricity

At this stage Powercor has elected to comment on the draft Strategy Plan.

Telecommunications

Telstra is the network service provider for Nathalia, and it too has advised it will comment on the specific of the draft Strategy Plan during exhibition period.

The need or otherwise to upgrade their network assets would be investigated in detail at the time of application for a planning permit.

6.5 Options for Future Industrial Land

As noted previously in this Section, there is an area of land adjacent to the existing industrial precinct – to the east and west – that is not constrained by flooding. This land is considered suitable to cater for short term demand for industrial land.

The land to the west of the existing industrial precinct is being used for agricultural purposes and the landowner has indicated he has no intention to develop it for industrial purposes. For this reason the land has been identified within the Strategy Plan for future industrial purposes but the land only be rezoned upon the use of the land or the ownership of land changes.

A parcel of land to the south of the township along the Murray Valley Highway (approximately 1 kilometre south of the Nathalia-Katamatite Road) has been identified by the Nathalia Economic Development Committee and the Council as a possible site for a future industrial development. This land is likely to be available for development in the future, and can be serviced, although new services would have to be connected between the site and the existing services which currently extend to the Nathalia-Katamatite Road.

The land to the south west corner of the Murray Valley Highway and Boaden Street was identified for possible industrial development in the Moira Industrial Review. However it is considered that this land is not as suitable for industrial development as the other land options described above as the land is constrained by an existing channel along the Murray Valley Highway frontage – the construction of a bridge would be necessary to ensure access to the land from the Highway; Boaden Street has a relatively narrow road reservation which is currently not appropriate for heavy industrial traffic (the Nathalia-Katamatite Road which could provide access to the Highway and into the proposed future industrial area from east of Nathalia is a Road Zone Category 1); relatively new dwellings are located on the north side of Boaden Street with setbacks from the street boundary typical of a residential setting.

6.6 Industrial Land Strategy

To cater for the short to medium term demand, the vacant lots in the existing industrial precinct should be utilised. Land currently in the Farming Zone that is not constrained by flooding may provide for medium term industrial development.

Longer term demand can be catered for on flood-free, serviceable land to the south of the township, along the Murray Valley Highway. Any industrial developments along the Murray Valley Highway and at the main entry to the town centre should incorporate staging guidelines to ensure the co-ordinated development of the land and urban design principles to protect the visual amenity of the entry to town. This could be achieved by including land that is rezoned for industrial purposes within a Development Plan and Design and Development Overlays.

6.6.1 Release of Land

In relation to nominated future industrial areas, it is acknowledged that the market has a role to play in the release and development of land. As such a rigid implementation of the Strategy Plan may unreasonably restrict land supply and therefore impact on industrial and economic development in Nathalia.

Accordingly, it is recommended that the Council consider supporting proposals for the release and development of land within future industrial areas that diverge from the specified implementation timeframes where:

- The Nathalia Strategy Plan has been adopted and referenced in the Moira Planning Scheme;
- It is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority that the existing industrial land is not appropriate for the proposed development;
- A Development Plan applying to the site and/or relevant stage of the development has been prepared to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority; and
- The proponent can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority that the proposal will be adequately serviced with required infrastructure and that urban design initiatives will be implemented to minimise amenity impacts.

6.7 Summary and Recommendations

The following settlement strategies are recommended for industrial land use and development in Nathalia:

- In the short term, maintain the existing industrial precinct to the north of the town;
- Undertake discussions with VicTrack in regard to selling surplus Farming Zone land to perspective purchasers;
- Identify VicTrack surplus land for rezoning to an appropriate industrial zone;
- Identify the land to the west of existing industrial precinct for future industrial;
- Identify land to the south of the township, east of the Murray Valley Highway, for longer term industrial land, if required; and



- Encourage the implementation of urban design initiatives through the application of a Design and Development Overlay on land rezoned in Nathalia for industrial purposes;
- Include future industrial land in a Development Plan Overlay to ensure the appropriate staging/release of land and overall co-ordination of the development.

7 Open Space and Recreation

7.1 Existing Context

Land dedicated for open space and/or recreation within Nathalia is incorporated within the Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ).

Much of the open space within Nathalia contains the riparian environs of the Broken Creek and Nathalia Recreation Reserves which abut the Broken Creek.

By way of summary, Nathalia has the following recreational facilities:

- Showgrounds (annual agricultural show);
- Tennis club;
- Nathalia Recreation Reserve;
- Cricket club;
- Football and Netball club;
- Bowls;
- Nathalia Memorial Swimming Pool Aquatic Centre;
- Nathalia Sports & Leisure Centre;
- Memorial Swimming Pool;
- Amateur Swimming Club;
- Badminton club;
- Little athletics club;
- Darts club;
- Golf club;
- Nathalia Memorial Gardens Memorial Park;
- Scout Hall;
- Craft group;
- Angling Club; and
- Canoe Club.

The area located to the south of the Broken Creek along Weir Street is considered an important location for visitors to enjoy and appreciate the Broken Creek and environs.

7.2 Previous Studies

Moira Shire Council Cycling and Walking Strategy, 2005

A Cycling and Walking Strategy was prepared for the Moira Shire Council in 2005. The strategy made numerous recommendations in regard to Nathalia and its surrounds. In summary these recommendations included:

- Installation of footpaths to improve pedestrian access to and link the town centre, schools and other community facilities;
- Sealing shoulders of existing roads to allow for bicycle lanes;
- Installation of formal school crossings;
- Create a Broken Creek path; and
- Create a rail trail (on the disused railway line) between Nathalia and Picola.

Moira Shire Social Plan, 2007-2010

Coomes Consulting Group was appointed prepared a Social Plan for the Moira Shire. The goals that were created in the preparation of the Moira Social Plan were:

1. *Improve access to health and community services including service provision in growing towns*
2. *Increase community cohesion in Moira*
3. *Reduction in levels of disadvantage and social isolation across Moira Shire*
4. *Improve access to appropriate infrastructure and services for older people*
5. *A Moira community that supports young people*
6. *A community that is committed to provision of education and training for all life stages within the Moira Shire*
7. *Improve transport options to ensure all members of the community are able to access health and community services and to reduce isolation.*
8. *A community that supports families affected by drought and changes in the environment*

The Plan highlighted the need to provide appropriate recreation facilities for different age cohorts and interest groups within each town.

7.3 Options for Future Open Spaces

The provision of open spaces in future residential areas should be carefully planned, preferably at a development plan stage, so their locations can be equitably distributed across residential neighbourhoods. The Nathalia Development Plan provides for good size spaces which can incorporate water treatment facilities as required.

Areas set aside for open space should be of an adequate size to provide for informal active recreation and a focal point for the local community, as well as catering for drainage needs.

As outlined in the Nathalia Development Plan Report:

The Subdivision Act 1988 requires developments to provide a maximum of 5% of the developable land for open space. This may be provided in land or the cash equivalent. It is understood that it has been the historic practice of the Moira Shire Council to accept a cash contribution. Whilst this may be well intended, with the contribution to go towards the provision of more meaningful open spaces, this appears to have not occurred.

Many metropolitan Councils, particularly those in growth areas, require a higher minimum percentage of open space for new developments. Clause 52.01 of the Moira Planning Scheme can provide for this, though requires a planning scheme amendment to be implemented. This, in turn, requires an open space strategy to be produced and justification for a higher contribution provided.

In the Nathalia Development Plan Report it is noted that:

Many... Councils do not accept encumbered open space as part of the 5% contribution. Encumbered open space is that space used for another purpose (e.g. required for drainage purposes) and thus may not be useable at all times. Clauses 12 and 56 of the Moira Planning Scheme provide specific objectives for open space and the provision of encumbered land does not meet these, except in specific circumstances.

Consistent with the Nathalia Development Plan, this Strategy Plan recommends that the Moira Shire Council does not include encumbered open space as part of the 5% contribution.

The ageing of Nathalia's population and their preferred leisure activities will also be a consideration in the provision and of new open space areas and/or redevelopment of existing areas. In particular, the network of passive open spaces is likely to be more heavily used as the proportion of residents in older age groups increases.

7.4 Open Space Land Strategy

The State policy applicable to open space provision (Clause 15.10 of the Moira Planning Scheme) provides the objectives and open space implementation methods. The primary considerations for open space and recreational land in Nathalia include the following:

- Open spaces should be used for recreation and conservation of natural and cultural environments;
- New residential areas should be provided with adequate levels and variety of open spaces. Where possible and practical these spaces should be appropriately linked so as to provide a network of open spaces;
- Open spaces can incorporate features such as drainage lines and waterways;
- Areas of public open space should be zoned Public Park and Recreation Zone; and
- Appropriate land uses should be sited adjoining regional open space networks.

The sustainable provision of open space is of integral importance to all communities.



It is appropriate for new open space facilities to be incorporated into residential growth areas. The provision and location of open space has been identified for the proposed residential neighbourhoods in each of the two versions of the Nathalia Development Plan. This will ensure that future residents within the new residential areas will have adequate accessibility to appropriate facilities.

The creation of an integrated park network, with linear paths along floodway's and creek frontages is essential to provide additional opportunities for walking, cycling and children's play.

The area of open space along Weir Street and south of the Broken Creek should be improved to encourage locals as well as those visiting and/or those who are passing through Nathalia to stop. In particular, car parking and easy movement of long vehicles should be catered for.

8 Traffic and Transport

8.1 Existing Context

The Moira Planning Scheme encourages efficient transportation networks through Nathalia. The primary road network servicing Nathalia is the Murray Valley Highway (Blake Street). The Murray Valley Highway passes through the Nathalia town centre and is the major link between Wodonga to the east and Robinvale (past Swan Hill) in the west.

Recent traffic counts by the Moira Shire Council show that the Murray Valley Highway carries 8,000 vehicles per day. The Highway incorporates a bridge which provides access across the Broken Creek; and a large round-about is located at the intersection with Bromley Street, just of the Creek. There have been numerous concerns raised about the standard and width of the bridge and the safety of the intersection. Discussions with VicRoads indicate that there are no plans in the near future to upgrade the bridge or the intersection.

8.2 Previous Studies

Nathalia Development Plan, September 2006

As outlined in Section 4.2 the Moira Shire Council adopted the Development Plan Report for Numurkah, Nathalia, Cobram and Yarrawonga (prepared by EarthTech and TTM Consulting) in February 2007.

The study area for Nathalia was approximately 35 hectares to the west of the town centre, primarily within the Residential I Zone, with a small portion to the south in the Farming Zone. All of the land is also affected by Schedule I to the Development Plan Overlay.

With regard to traffic issues for the Development Plan area, the Report proposed a westward extension of the existing street network at 5 locations. It is anticipated that the Development Plan area will create approximately 250 dwelling sites and accordingly, the roads have been designed to accommodate at least 2,000 vehicle movements per day.

8.3 Public Transport

A V-line bus service runs through Nathalia to Shepparton twice daily; providing access to the rail services commencing/terminating in Shepparton.

There are a number of school buses which service the rural areas around Nathalia, including several in southern New South Wales.

Increasing fuel prices, the ageing population and the number of people living outside existing town areas will increase the demand for both public and community transport services in the town. Limited public transport options can lead to dependency on the car

and social isolation for non car owners such as the elderly, the young or low income earners.

Accessibility throughout the town should be improved. Appropriate links between popular destinations such as the town centre, recreational facilities and the various residential precincts should be explored.

8.4 Anticipated Trends

Whilst this Strategy Plan has not involved a comprehensive review of the traffic management issues within the study area, it is anticipated that the following issues will need to be managed:

- An increase in heavy vehicular movements through the town;
- The safety of the existing bridge crossing over the Broken Creek and the round - about to the south of the bridge;
- An increase in pressure for both vehicle and pedestrian/cycle connections between the main residential growth areas to the west and the town centre; and
- An increase in demand for public transport servicing the town centre and other regional areas.

8.5 Strategy Plan

Efficient and effective transportation networks through and around Nathalia are encouraged and should be provided. As identified above, at present the transportation network is generally sufficient; although there continue to be issues with the Murray Valley Highway bridge and round-about near the Broken Creek.

8.5.1 Residential Areas Traffic and Transport

In regard to traffic and transport networks to and through residential areas, the principles outlined in the Nathalia Development Plan Report should be implemented in future residential areas. Particular regard should be given to providing:

- A clear hierarchy of roads which channels and disperses traffic effectively and promotes a connected and permeable neighbourhood;
- A network which can reduce the vehicle kilometres travelled for the conduct of daily tasks;
- Local roads which carry a level of traffic to enhance pedestrian safety and security;
- Connections between existing and proposed residential neighbourhoods;
- A modified grid design which encourages public transport and eases traffic by providing drivers with alternative routes;
- A local road network which focuses on through connection between key roads to promote walk ability and alternative means of movements;
- A road network which allows allotments of regular shape and appropriate solar orientation; and



- Courts (cul-de-sacs) only in locations where a through connection is not possible.

8.5.2 Public Transport

As the population of Nathalia ages, it will be important to improve public transport accessibility throughout the town. Appropriate links between popular destinations such as the town centre, recreational facilities and the various residential precincts are important.

Investigations should be made into increasing the frequency and extending the route of the V-line bus service which currently runs through Nathalia.

8.5.3 Further Investigations

There are a number of trends anticipated which cannot be qualified or quantified as part of this Strategy Plan. In this regard a comprehensive traffic and transport analysis and assessment for Nathalia would be required. Such an assessment should review and make recommendations regarding the overall network, and also address specific matters including, but not limited to the:

- Movements of traffic passing through Nathalia, especially heavy and industrial transport;
- Car parking in the town centre, especially for long vehicles;
- Traffic speeds within the built up areas along the Murray Valley Highway and the Nathalia Katamatite Road;
- An intersection upgrade at the Murray Valley Highway and Bromley Street.

9 Community Facilities

9.1 Existing Conditions

Community facilities are an integral component of the fabric of urban centres. An equitable distribution of community facilities is essential to the efficient functioning of a town.

Nathalia includes a wide range of community facilities, including:

- Schools (State primary, Catholic primary, State secondary, Catholic secondary, Glenvale schools, State pre-school);
- Nathalia Community Education Centre;
- The existing Nathalia Hospital (10 acute beds, 1 palliative care bed, 16 residents in the nursing home with 8 independent living units) and new hospital under construction;
- New nursing homes under construction;
- Doctors (one clinic with three doctors);
- Library;
- Toy library;
- Senior citizens;
- Neighbourhood/community house;
- Service clubs; and
- Civic centre.

9.2 Previous Studies

Moira Social Plan 2007 – 2010

As noted in Section 7.2 above, Coomes Consulting Group prepared a Social Plan for the Moira Shire Council in 2007. Several of the goals of the plan relate to the importance of ensuring residents have access to appropriate community facilities and infrastructure.

9.3 Anticipated Trends

It is anticipated that as the population of Nathalia ages, there will be a greater demand for a range of community and social facilities, including educational and health services. As a Social Plan has already been prepared for the municipality, it is considered appropriate that this report focuses on quantifying and qualifying the projected demand and supply for each relevant service.

9.4 Community Facilities Strategy

9.4.1 General Provision of Services and Facilities

A sustainable level and mix of community services and facilities is important in achieving a functional town. The Strategy Plan should be flexible to accommodate the location of additional services and facilities once a particular demand and location has been identified.

With regards to Nathalia, though the population is not expected to increase significantly in the foreseeable future, the age profile indicates that there is likely to be changing demand for health and community services over the coming twenty years. There is a need to ensure that the infrastructure and systems are in place to support these changes.

9.4.2 Medical Services

The existing Hospital occupies land to the north east of the town centre. The hospital serves the local catchment and provides 10 acute beds, 1 palliative care bed (single room) and there are 16 residents in the nursing home with, 8 independent living units catering for elderly couples and singles. A new hospital is currently being constructed to the west of the town centre.

A medical clinic with three resident doctors and additional visiting health professionals is also located in North Street; adjacent to the existing hospital. A modern low-care hostel adjacent to the new hospital is currently being constructed. This hostel will have capacity for twenty occupants.

Adding to the need or demand for medical and health facilities is the ageing population of Nathalia and its surrounds. Whilst the demand for medical facilities is market driven; not land use planning driven, it is recommended that the identification of an appropriate location for a medical precinct be incorporated into a land use plan (this Strategy Plan). As such, this Plan provides for a medical precinct around the new hospital and age care hostel.

Whilst encouraging medical specialists to relocate to Nathalia is outside the scope of this Strategy Plan, the Plan should be flexible so as to facilitate the development of appropriate sites for such services as required. The co-location of specialist facilities is particularly encouraged.

The land area required for a medical precinct to be established is unknown at this time; however the siting of the precinct in proximity to the new Nathalia Hospital is strongly encouraged. It may also be possible to co-locate a number of the facilities on the hospital site itself.

Land surrounding the new Nathalia Hospital is generally incorporated within the Residential I Zone. There are no planning constraints to utilising residential zoned land

for medical facilities; however proposed facilities would be subject to the planning permit application process. It is noted that the fourth objective of the Residential I Zone is:

'In appropriate locations, to allow educational, recreational, religious, community and a limited range of other non-residential uses to serve local community needs.'

9.4.3 Education Services

Nathalia currently houses six primary and secondary educational campuses. Four of these schools are located in close proximity to each other in an area to the east of the Nathalia town centre. There is the potential for this area to become a consolidated *education precinct* in which the sharing of buildings and other facilities is encouraged.

A concern raised by the Nathalia community during the consultation process is the lack of local tertiary educational facilities. As such, it would be appropriate for Council to actively pursue discussions with nearby tertiary and further education providers, such as GOTAFE and TAFE with the view to establishing options for tertiary study within the town. It is acknowledged that the decision to provide tertiary and further education within Nathalia is market driven; however Council should take a facilitation role on this issue. The potential flow-on effects include the retention of youth in the region, skills development, increased business and a stimulus to social interactions and community life.

9.4.4 Arts & Cultural Precinct

The Nathalia Economic Development Committee and local community have been proactive in encouraging the establishment of an arts and cultural precinct to the immediate east of Nathalia town centre. The Committee has commissioned the development of a masterplan for this precinct. The plan includes:

- Restoration and redevelopment of the Court House Hotel;
- A small gallery;
- Teaching and demonstration studios;
- Performance space, small cinema;
- Hostel accommodation for schoolchildren and other groups;
- Heritage and historical displays; and
- Retail space.

Whilst there is still significant work to be undertaken in terms of the feasibility of this precinct, this Strategy Plan supports the establishment of such a precinct. At this stage the suggested location is considered suitable and has been identified as an arts and cultural precinct on the Strategy Plan.

10 Rural and Agricultural Land

10.1 Existing Conditions

The urban areas of Nathalia are surrounded by rural land. These rural areas are generally included within the Farming Zone (FZ) which typically encourages the sustainable use of rural land for agriculture.

The rural land immediately surrounding Nathalia is generally used for a variety of agricultural uses including grazing and cropping. The majority of rural land within the study area is actively used.

The Moira Shire Council, in conjunction with the Greater Shepparton City and the Campaspe Shire Councils, has undertaken a review of rural areas. This Regional Rural Land Use Strategy was recently adopted by Moira Shire Council. The review includes recommendations regarding the implementation of the new rural zones, rezoning of land to other non-rural zones and appropriate subdivision sizes within the rural areas.

One recommendation was increasing the minimum subdivision size of land in rural area. Whilst the Strategy is going through the necessary approval process through Moira Planning Scheme Amendment C45, Moira Shire Council has adopted an interim minimum subdivision size of 100 hectares for rural land within an irrigated area and 250 hectares for rural land in a dry land area. Given the rural land around Nathalia is within an irrigated area, the minimum subdivision size is therefore 100 hectares. The Minister for Planning approved the inclusion of the interim controls in the Moira Planning Scheme on 25 September 2008.

Although no specific concerns have been raised during the consultation process, the continuing operations of agriculture, particularly within close proximity to emerging residential areas, needs to be taken into consideration when preparing this Strategy Plan. Issues relate to noise, spray drift, dust and the like often lead to conflict at the rural/urban interface.

10.2 Anticipated Trends

It is anticipated that agricultural properties at the rural/urban interface will experience some degree of conflict and/or pressure from emerging urban development, especially residential. It is recognised, however, that this situation is not unique to Nathalia and is experienced within most rural and regional towns throughout Victoria and Australia. Good strategic planning can provide a higher degree of certainty to farmers located at or near the fringe; especially in terms of timing for the potential conversion of land for urban development.

Planning for urban development is not an exact science, however; and it is recommended that Council investigate and implement appropriate techniques for addressing the potential conflicts that arise at the urban/rural interface. This should be done in



consultation with the Department of Planning and Community Development and Department of Primary Industries.

10.3 Strategy Plan

This Strategy Plan recognises the importance and value of the agricultural industry to the economic employment base of Nathalia. As stated in Section 5.1, the agricultural industry employed 6% of the Nathalia workforce in 2006 and a further 18% were employed in manufacturing, with the manufacturing of agricultural products being a major industry within the town.

In this regard, the Strategy Plan seeks to provide a high degree of certainty for agricultural operations located at or near the urban/rural fringe. This should assist in the planning and decision making for investment in stock, infrastructure, machinery plants and the like, contributing to the continued strength of the agricultural base.

The Strategy Plan also supports the effective management of potential conflict at the rural urban interface and recommends that the Council implement appropriate techniques to address this issue. Such techniques could include restricting residential development within a certain distance from a continuing agricultural operation which could cause nuisance; and planting of appropriate species in buffers between orchards and residential or other sensitive land uses to reduce the adverse impacts of spray drift and other activities which can cause conflict. Consultation with the Department of Planning and Community Development and Department of Primary Industries should be undertaken.

It is further recommended that this Strategy Plan be flexible to accommodate any recommendations from the pending review of rural land; and that it is amended if necessary so as to incorporate any recommendations or proposed actions.

11 Recommendations and Implementation

The Strategy Plan provides specific recommendations on how future development within Nathalia should proceed. These recommendations reflect the desired future role of Nathalia and will ensure the town grows and develops appropriately.

This section provides a summary of the primary issues incorporated within the Strategy Plan and the means by which these can be implemented. Various actions are required to implement the Strategy Plan, and the resolution of the various issues is generally achieved through the following means:

- Amendments to the Moira Planning Scheme in its local policy and zone and overlay controls; and
- Other actions such as strategic studies, facilitation of consultation, etc.

The various implementation measures are outlined below.

11.1 Recommendations for Residential Land Strategy

11.1.1 Amendment to the Moira Planning Scheme

- Amend Clause 21.04 to replace the existing Settlement Strategies with the revised Settlement Strategies as per Section 12;
- Amend Clause 21.04 to replace the Nathalia Town Structure Plan with the Nathalia Strategy Plan (Figure 7 at Section 12);
- Amend the planning scheme to include all land identified for short, medium and long term residential development within a Development Plan Overlay; if they are not already included within this overlay. The requirements of the Development Plan Overlay should at least be consistent with the existing Development Plan Overlay – Schedule 1.

11.1.2 Other Actions

- Undertake a Housing Strategy for the municipality to quantify and qualify the needs for different types of housing, including affordable housing and lifestyle opportunities;
- Council should take a lead role in the preparation of any future Development Plans in consultation with relevant land owners and service authorities.

11.2 Recommendations for Commercial Land Strategy

11.2.1 Amendment to the Moira Planning Scheme

- Amend Clause 21.04 to replace the existing Settlement Strategies with the revised Settlement Strategies as per Section 12; and

- Amend Clause 21.04 to replace the Nathalia Town Structure Plan with the Nathalia Strategy Plan (Figure 7 at Section 12).

11.2.2 Other Actions

- Undertake a Retail/Business Floorspace Analysis for Nathalia.

11.3 Recommendations for Industrial Land Strategy

11.3.1 Amendment to the Moira Planning Scheme

- Amend Clause 21.04 to replace the existing Settlement Strategies with the revised Settlement Strategies as per Section 12;
- Amend Clause 21.04 to replace the Nathalia Town Structure Plan with the Nathalia Strategy Plan (Figure 7 at Section 12);
- Rezone land identified in the Strategy Plan for short and medium-term industrial use to the Industrial 1 Zone. Some discussion with VicTrack may be required before land owned by this agency is rezoned;

11.3.2 Other Actions

- Council should facilitate high quality industrial development to ensure that adequate industrial land is available and that the amenity of surrounding areas is protected;
- Continue discussions with VicTrack in regard to the future industrial use of railway land.
- At the time of rezoning include the land identified for industrial purposes that is located south of the town, along the Murray Valley Highway, in a Design and Development Overlay.

11.4 Recommendations for Open Space and Recreation

11.4.1 Amendment to the Moira Planning Scheme

- Amend Clause 21.04 to replace the existing Settlement Strategies with the revised Settlement Strategies as per Section 12;
- Amend Clause 21.04 to replace the Nathalia Town Structure Plan with the Nathalia Strategy Plan (Figure 7 at Section 12);

11.4.2 Other Actions

- Facilitate improvement and enhancement of the open space along Weir Street and south of Broken Creek;

- Prepare a policy position on the inclusion or otherwise of encumbered land as part of the required public open space contribution; and
- Ensure the requirements of the Development Plan Overlay (as recommended in Section 11.1.1 above) include provision for appropriately located public open space.

11.5 Recommendations for Traffic and Transport

11.5.1 Amendment to the Moira Planning Scheme

- Amend Clause 21.04 to replace the existing Settlement Strategies with the revised Settlement Strategies as per Section 12; and
- Amend Clause 21.04 to replace the Nathalia Town Structure Plan with the Nathalia Strategy Plan (Figure 7 at Section 12).

11.5.2 Other Actions

- Undertake a traffic and transport assessment for Nathalia; and
- Continue to encourage the provision of public transport to service Nathalia.

11.6 Recommendations for Community Facilities

11.6.1 Amendment to the Moira Planning Scheme

- Amend Clause 21.04 to replace the existing Settlement Strategies with the revised Settlement Strategies as per Section 12; and
- Amend Clause 21.04 to replace the Nathalia Town Structure Plan with the Nathalia Strategy Plan (Figure 7 at Section 12).

11.6.2 Other Actions

- Investigate the establishment of an education precinct east of the town centre around existing school facilities;
- Undertake discussions with tertiary and further education providers to facilitate the provision of such courses/subjects in Nathalia;
- Investigate the establishment of an arts and cultural precinct east of the town centre at and near the former Council depot;
- Work with the local community to investigate options for the development of an arts and cultural precinct;
- Encourage establishment of child care centre, especially near education facilities; and
- Ensure the requirements of the Development Plan Overlay (as recommended in Section 11.1.1 above) include provision for appropriately located community facilities.



11.7 Recommendations for Rural and Agricultural Lands

11.7.1 Amendment to the Moira Planning Scheme

- Amend Clause 21.04 to replace the existing Settlement Strategies with the revised Settlement Strategies as per Section 12; and
- Amend Clause 21.04 to replace the Nathalia Town Structure Plan with the Nathalia Strategy Plan (Figure 7 at Section 12).

11.7.2 Other Actions

- In consultation with the DPCD, the Department of Sustainability and Environment and Department of Primary Industries, prepare a policy on the treatment of the rural/urban interface.

12 Nathalia Settlement Strategy and Strategy Plan

Following the preceding analysis and assessment of various land use activities, the following Settlement Strategy and Strategy Plan has been prepared for Nathalia. As per the recommendation of Section 11, it is proposed that the Moira Planning Scheme be amended to include the following.

12.1 Settlement Strategy

- Future development of the town of Nathalia will generally be in accordance with the Nathalia Strategy Plan (refer Clause 21.04-5);
- The existing structure of Nathalia, with its clear division between land use activities, should not be compromised;
- A mix of housing densities is encouraged. Medium density development is encouraged around the town centre, near public open space and in areas with good access to community facilities and existing and potential public transport routes;
- Short term residential development will be directed to land already zoned for residential purposes;
- Medium and long term residential should be directed to the west and south-west of the town, as indicated in the Nathalia Strategy Plan;
- Encourage new developments and redevelopments to consider the provision of affordable housing;
- Include all areas identified for short, medium and long term residential in a Development Plan Overlay to ensure their orderly development and co-ordinated provision of infrastructure, community services and facilities;
- In the short term, industrial development will be focused to the north of the town. Additional long-term demand – and demand for larger industrial allotments – will be accommodated to the south of the town, east of the Murray Valley Highway.
- Continue discussions with VicTrack in regard to the use of a portion of their land for industrial development;
- Facilitate the redevelopment of surplus railway land (if deemed surplus by VicTrack) for industrial purposes as appropriate;
- Enhance open space facilities and improve accessibility – particularly along Broken Creek;
- Ensure that open space is provided in appropriate locations in new residential developments;
- Undertake a retail/business floorspace analysis for Nathalia;
- Encourage the redevelopment of vacant and underutilised sites in the town centre;
- Undertake a traffic and transport analysis and assessment for Nathalia;
- Facilitate the establishment of a medical precinct around the new hospital in Phillip Street;



- Encourage the investigation into the development of the 'education precinct' and sharing of facilities between educational institutions to the east of the town centre;
- Encourage the investigation into the development of an arts and cultural precinct to the immediate south-east of the town centre (as delineated in the Strategy Plan); and
- Ensure that new and expanding residential communities are sensitive to the continued use of adjoining land for agricultural purposes, and that appropriate buffers are included in plans for residential development.

12.2 Strategy Plan

The Strategy Plan for Nathalia is shown in Figure 7 over the page.

Figure 7: Nathalia Strategy Plan

