



# LARA STRUCTURE PLAN

Prepared by the City of Greater Geelong  
Adopted June 2009



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# **PART A    STRUCTURE PLAN**

## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Purpose of the Structure Plan**

The 2009 Lara Structure Plan is a strategic framework for the future planning and development of the township. The Structure Plan has been developed as a partial review of the 2007 Lara Structure Plan.

The purpose of the Structure Plan is to:

- Identify the key strategic planning issues facing the township, including community aspirations and needs;
- Articulate the preferred future directions for the townships, including the location of Settlement Boundaries; and
- Identify appropriate planning controls which will protect and enhance the distinctive elements of the township, biodiversity and landscape features.

### **1.2 How will this plan be used?**

The Lara Structure Plan is to be used by the City of Greater Geelong to determine the application of local planning policies, planning zones and overlays. It will guide Council's consideration of proposed rezonings and applications for planning permits. Council will also use the Structure Plan to determine the future provision of infrastructure and services in the township.

Implementation of the Lara Structure Plan will provide certainty for residents and landowners regarding the future planning direction for the township for the next 10 years. The take-up of land and redevelopment will be reviewed every five years and if considered appropriate a full review of the Structure Plan should be undertaken.

### **1.3 Plan Components**

The Structure Plan contains three parts, **Part A** "*Structure Plan*", **Part B** "*Implementation & Review*" and **Part C** "*Background Report*".

**Part A** contains the Structure Plan which includes principles and directions in response to the key influences identified in the background report, for each of the following key themes:

- Urban Growth
- Infrastructure
- Housing
- Natural Environment
- Economic Development and Employment

**Part B** contains a program for implementing the Structure Plan including the undertaking of other strategic work and future review of this Structure Plan.

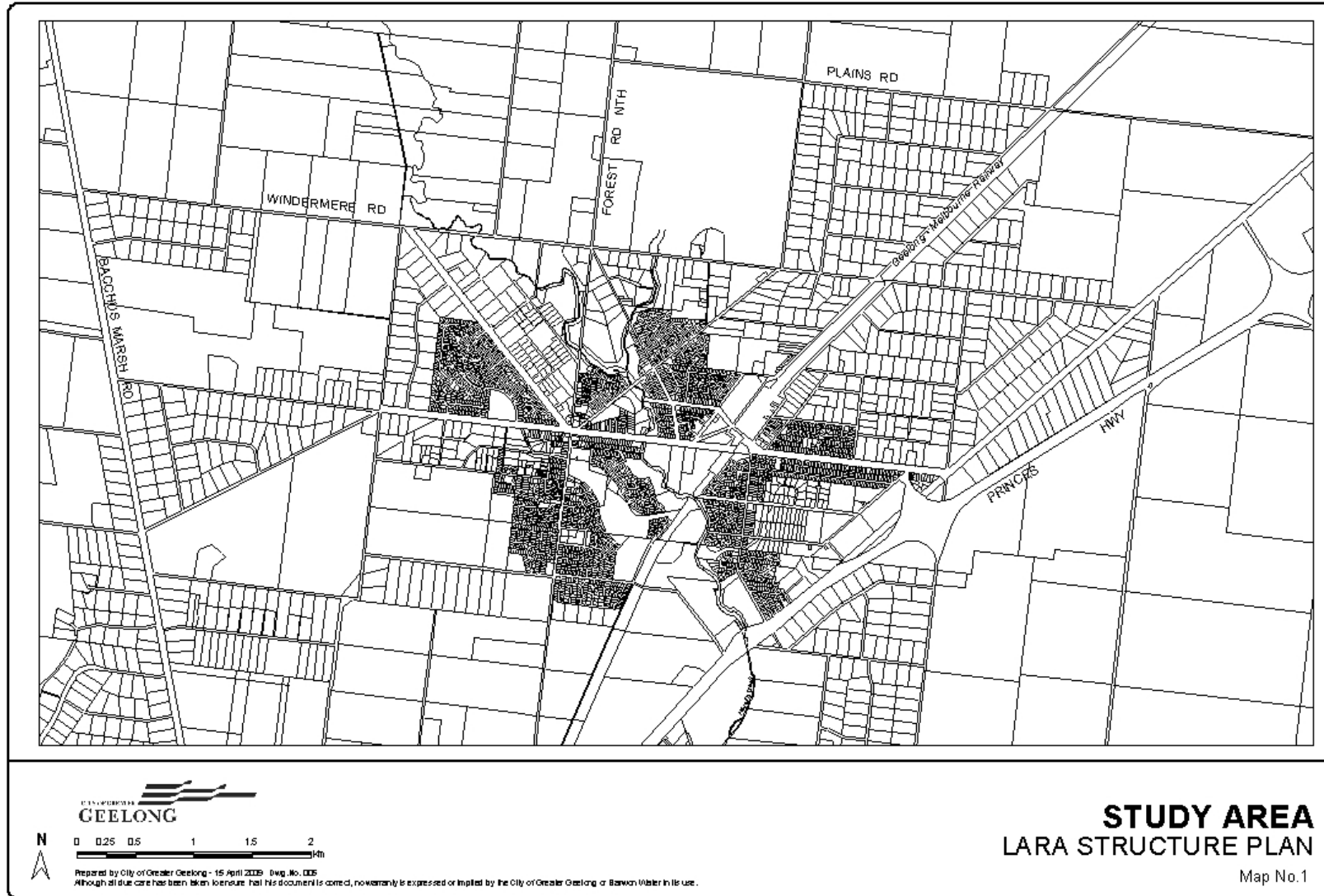
**Part C** provides the foundation and contextual information for the Structure Plan and identifies the issues, opportunities and constraints facing the township, under the following headings:

- Policy Context
- Natural and Urban Environment
- Demographics & Social Profile
- Township Facilities and Services
- Transport and Physical Infrastructure
- Commercial Growth, Residential Lot Supply and Further Development

#### **1.4 The Study Area**

The Lara Structure Plan Study Area includes the existing urban area of Lara, the surrounding rural residential subdivisions, Heales Road Industrial Estate to the south and Avalon Airport to the east and the surrounding rural hinterland. The extent of the Study Area is indicated on Map 1.

# Map 1 – Study Area



## **2.0 Key Influences**

The background report identifies and discusses in detail key issues, opportunities and constraints under the following headings which assist in determining the key directions of the Structure Plan.

### **2.1 Policy Context**

- Lara is a designated growth area within the municipality.
- There is a need to nominate a clear Settlement Boundary for the township and provide a compact urban form while maintaining the rural setting.
- Development should not encroach on flood prone areas.
- There is a need to ensure retail growth is consistent with the established retail hierarchy.
- Opportunities exist for enhancement and provision of additional open space, recreational facilities and linkages.
- Community facilities should be provided commensurate with communities needs.
- Strong State and Local Planning Policies provide directions for:
  - protection of the rural environment and agricultural activities
  - enhancement of the design and built form of the township
  - protection of flood plains
  - protection of the environment

### **2.2 Natural and Urban Environment**

- The opportunity to improve the key environmental and landscape features such as Hovells Creek, Limeburners Bay, Serendip Sanctuary, You Yangs and Brisbane Ranges.
- The need to support public land managers to assist in the on-going management of the environment.
- The need to protect aboriginal and post contact heritage values.
- The need to maintain a non urban break around the township.
- The need to prevent urban development from encroaching onto land subject to flooding, drainage constraints, industrial buffers and air craft noise constraints.

### **2.3 Demographics and Social Profile**

- Lara will continue to experience and provide for steady population growth.
- Lara will continue to have a high proportion of family households which is an important consideration when planning for community infrastructure and facilities and housing diversity.
- Employment and journey to work data indicates the majority of Lara residents in the workforce are employed outside the township.
- The residents of the township rely primarily upon private cars for transport however there is an opportunity to reduce car reliance through improved pedestrian, bicycle and public transport infrastructure and services.

## **2.4 Township Facilities and Services**

- There is a need to reinforce The Centreway as the primary commercial area for Lara and expand the town centre to cater for the towns retail needs.
- Growth around the shopping area at the Patullos Road – Forest Road intersection should be contained.
- With an increase in population there is a need to provide additional community and recreation services, facilities and infrastructure.
- The Lara Community Infrastructure Analysis and the Lara Outdoor Recreation Facilities Study identify services, facilities and infrastructure which could be upgraded or provided to better serve the community.
- The town is well serviced by education facilities which have capacity for growth.

## **2.5 Transport and Physical Infrastructure**

- Opportunity to improve the limited pedestrian and bicycle linkages throughout the township and within the open space areas.
- The compact size of the township and the location of commercial and community activities provide an excellent opportunity for more sustainable, non-vehicle reliance travel.
- Opportunity to provide improved and more frequent public transport options including the provision of a transport interchange at the train station and school bus interchange.
- The town centre is currently well serviced by parking although it is not well arranged.
- Opportunity to improve traffic congestion issues at key sites such as the railway crossing, around the retail centre and schools and issues around truck routes.
- Barwon Water is satisfied that the capacity of the water and sewerage systems are, or will be capable of accommodating future growth.
- The drainage infrastructure is under increasing pressure and its performance is reducing.

## **2.6 Commercial Growth, Residential Lot Supply and Further Development**

- There should be no expansion of the industrial zones within the Lara township settlement boundary.
- The Heales Road Industrial Estate, Avalon Airport and the proposed Intermodal Transport facility provide significant opportunities for employment and economic growth and require protection from inappropriate uses to allow development, operation and growth opportunities and long term viability.
- There is a demand for additional retail floor space, including a full line supermarket.
- Expansion of the town centre is constrained by adjoining residential development.
- Pressure to create more residential allotments and rural living allotments.
- Designation of Lara as an urban growth area.
- The present zoned lot supply will accommodate growth for at least the next 12 years.



## **3.0 The Plan**

### **3.1 Vision**

The vision for the Lara township is described below:

Lara in 2021 will offer residents a diverse lifestyle choice from urban living to rural residential living. The town will retain its rural setting with the You Yangs providing a scenic back drop. The town will continue to be attractive to families and there will be a range of services, infrastructure and facilities including an integrated open space network, community hubs and a vibrant, attractive town centre to cater to community needs.

The train station will be upgraded to become a modern transport interchange increasing the use of public transportation. Lara will continue to take advantage of its strategic location close to Geelong, Melbourne, ports, Avalon Airport and road and rail networks to attract investment opportunities.

### **3.2 Role of the Township**

Lara is the major township at the northern end of the municipality approximately 15 kilometres north of the Geelong Central Activities Area, just west of the Princes Freeway.

The township has an urban core of residential development surrounded to the north, east and west by extensive rural residential living areas. Farming zoned land separates Lara and the Heales Road Industrial Estate to the south. The township is bisected by Hovells Creek which has a history of periodic flooding and inundation. Also bisecting Lara is the Melbourne - Warrnambool railway line with commuter services between Geelong and Melbourne stopping at Lara. The eastern perimeter of Lara is the Princes Highway which connects Geelong and Melbourne. Lara has one shopping centre, The Centreway and another minor shopping strip, Patullos Road (the Sixways) which collectively contain a supermarket, specialty shops, food outlets, offices and banks and a range of community services and facilities. There are primary and secondary school facilities.

Lara does not appear to fulfill a rural service township role, but rather acts as an urban satellite of Geelong. Lara offers a range of lifestyles and housing choice including urban and rural residential. An attraction of Lara is its rural setting and the spacious residential allotments, established street trees, gardens and wide residential streets. Preservation of this character as part of any additional growth of the town is a desired outcome of the Structure Plan.

### **3.3 Principles and Directions**

The structure plan identifies principles (objectives) and directions (strategies) relating to the key planning themes:

- Urban Growth
- Settlement and Housing
- Economic Development and Employment
- Infrastructure
- Natural Environment
- Rural Areas

### **3.3.1 Urban Growth**

Lara has been identified as a growth area in Geelong's Urban Growth Strategy (1996) and Municipal Strategic Statement. The township experienced rapid growth between 1985 and 2006 where the population increased from 5,186 persons to 10,525 persons, this increase of 5,339 represents a 2.34% p.a. growth rate. It is estimated that the population in 2008 has increased to just over 11,682 people. The current lot supply in Lara is approximately 12.5 years.

Structure Plans typically designate 10-15 years lot supply, taking into account areas identified for urban growth (Residential 1 zoning) as part of this Structure Plan, the lot supply will be increased to approximately 20 years. This lot supply is considered appropriate given Lara is a designated growth area and the nominated sites for residential development are all infill sites. These infill sites will have a variety of factors that affect their release including up to a two year rezoning process, development approval timing and staged land releases, therefore the 20 year lot supply is considered appropriate.

Lara is a designated urban growth location within the City of Greater Geelong, however it is subject to a range of physical constraints, both natural and artificial which influence the opportunities and directions of urban growth. These constraints have been considered in the selection of areas proposed in this Structure Plan for residential development.

#### **Short Term Development**

##### **Canterbury Road West – Grand Lakes Estate**

This area was recently rezoned to Residential 1 Zone subject to Development Plan Overlay 13. This estate provides around 792 lots. Stage 1 of the development includes 125 lots which should be completed around June 2009. The developer indicated 80 lots had been sold as of December 2008.

##### **Canterbury Road East**

This is an area of high ground between Hovells Creek, the Princes Highway and the Melbourne-Geelong Railway line. It is currently undeveloped rural land in the one ownership.

The land offers good opportunities for residential development provided such development is located outside the 100 year flood extent with minimum floor levels set above the adjacent flood level with an appropriate freeboard or safety margin. As this area is adjacent to Hovells Creek, best practice stormwater quality management needs to be installed as part of any subdivision to ensure that there is minimal impact on the Creek downstream towards Limeburners Bay.

The small south west corner of the site located within the 1000 metre buffer zone required for the Heales Road Industrial Estate is not included in the recommended rezoning area. There is an opportunity to use the area within the buffer for a development contribution such as sporting fields.

It is recommended that this site be rezoned from Farming Zone to Residential 1 Zone subject to a Development Plan Overlay to address development issues such as storm water management, open space provision, movement network, general infrastructure provision, community infrastructure and general subdivision layout.

##### **Caddys Road**

The Caddys Road area is bound by Windermere Road, Flinders Road, Serendip Creek and an existing urban area to the south. The area is located at the northern end of Lara and has an area of approximately 38 hectares. The area is currently zoned Rural Living, is sparsely developed and has a large proportion of land (approximately 20 hectares) in one ownership. South of the site is conventional residential land, to the north is Serendip Sanctuary and to the east and west is rural living zoned land. The site is within close proximity to Lara Primary and Secondary Schools, Lara Recreation Reserve, Centreway (town centre), Lara Railway Station and Austin Park.

The land was assessed as part of the Lara Flood Study Part 1 and it was found that only parts of the area are subject to inundation and these are relatively shallow and would not preclude opportunities for suitable development that contains adequate provision for flood conveyance.

Previous recommendations for this site have been to maintain the Rural Living zoning. A number of issues were raised in relation to the urban development of this site including possible impacts on Serendip Sanctuary from more intensive subdivision; loss of views for existing residential properties to the south; diminishing the rural residential buffer to the north of the town; loss of property values and residential amenity and potential traffic impacts on Flinders Avenue adjacent to Caddys Road and the Lara Primary School.

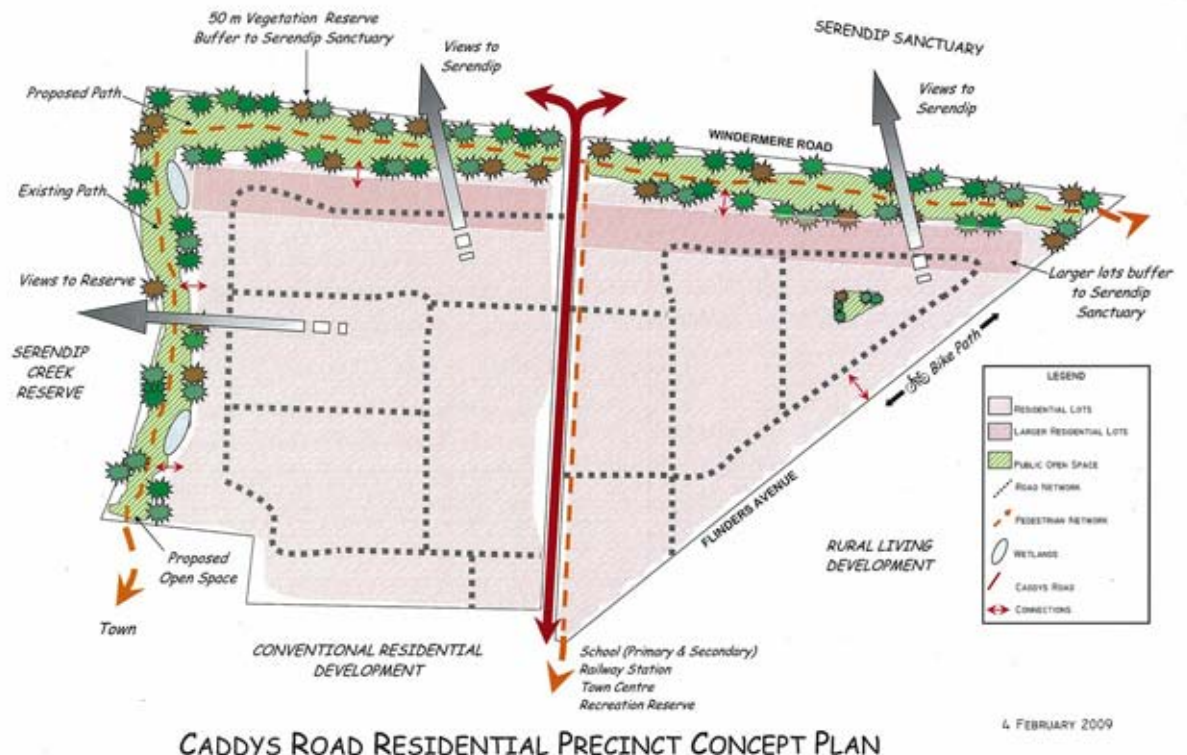
The Department of Sustainability and Environment and Parks Victoria (the manager of the adjoining Serendip Sanctuary) have indicated two options for dealing with the interface treatment to Serendip Sanctuary:

- Provision of lots at 1ha size and not less than 100 metres in depth from Windermere Road, or
- Provision of a revegetation strip 50 metres in width adjacent Windermere Road.

These options were considered to provide a beneficial graduation of land treatment between the Sanctuary itself and a conventional residential development pattern. These options would also maintain a rural residential landscape along Windermere Road as the northern edge of the town and reduce the number of new access points onto the road and minimise the conflict with heavy vehicle traffic using this route. A concept plan has been developed, see figure 1 below, which outlines these main principles

It is recommended this area be rezoned from Rural Living to Residential 1 with a Development Plan Overlay which addresses drainage and stormwater management, buffers to Serendip Sanctuary, open space, the movement network and community design.

**Figure 1 – Caddys Road Concept Plan**



### **Ponds Drive Area**

This area includes 42 – 44 Ponds Drive and all land affected by the Urban Floodway Zone at the west end of Ponds Drive, including the land at 60 Forest Road North.

The proposed works on the levee bank on the northern side of Ponds Drive across to Forest Road North must be completed to the Corangamite Catchment Management Authorities specifications in order for the land to be declared flood free and suitable for further residential development.

Once these works are satisfactorily completed it is recommended that the Urban Floodway Zone is replaced with the Residential 1 Zone, subject to approval of a subdivision layout or a Development Plan Overlay (DPO) or similar mechanism (including Flood and Site Stormwater Management Plans and a nominated finished floor level to cater for the 1 in 100 flows).

### **Kees Road**

This area includes 10 Kees Road near the corner of Forest Road North which is currently zoned Low Density Residential Zone. The site is a former quarry and contains unconsolidated fill ranging in depths from 2.2 metres to 6.4 metres. Council has previously not supported a rezoning request of the land to Residential 1 Zone on the grounds that Council engineers consider there is a risk Council will inherit the potentially expensive and ongoing maintenance and ultimate replacement of all road, drainage and footpath infrastructure resulting from unpredictable future soil settlement.

The proponent has indicated dwellings can be constructed using bored piers or precast piles to support them in the event of movement in the surrounding fill.

The land is centrally located within the township and could provide an opportunity for urban consolidation. Before Council would consider a request for rezoning the site would have to be cleared of unconsolidated fill and replaced with engineered fill to Councils satisfaction and be subject to approval of a subdivision layout or Development Plan Overlay (DPO) and a Site Stormwater Management Plan.

### **Future Residential Development**

#### **Patullos Road to Bacchus Marsh Road**

This opportunity land is generally bounded by Patullos, Bacchus Marsh, Windermere and O'Hallorans Roads and is mostly used for rural pursuits with some rural residential size lots in the West Gateway subdivision and fronting onto the eastern end of Patullos Road.

The subject area provides the best un-fragmented opportunities for Lara's future residential growth. This area should be protected from further rural residential and low-density residential subdivision so its potential as a long-term growth area for Lara is not prejudiced. Rezoning and subdivision to allow for rural residential or low density residential development will remove the land from this long term option and would preclude any future conversion to residential by virtue of the number of landowners, subdivision pattern and housing placement.

The recommendations to rezone identified areas of land to allow residential development will provide a significant additional supply of residentially zoned land (approximately 20 years) for the township in the short term, however, it is acknowledged the ability of this land to be delivered to the market is influenced by a number of factors.

A significant amount of work needs to be done prior to considering the rezoning of the future residential development area. Some of the matters that need to be considered include:

- The residential lot supply, demand and take-up
- Issues of drainage and flooding
- Infrastructure provision and servicing
- Integration with the existing township to ensure the area does not develop as a separate community
- Responding to the character of Lara
- Movement network
- Community planning including education, recreation, social, retail and civic infrastructure, facilities and services
- Open space

It is recommended that this area retains the Farming Zone until it can be clearly demonstrated the land is required for residential purposes based on population and lot supply/demand analysis. Once Council is satisfied rezoning the land to allow residential development is appropriate, any rezoning would be subject to a Development Plan Overlay or Incorporated Plan Overlay and a Development Contributions Plan or similar mechanisms to ensure a well planned, serviced and integrated development.

### **Manzeene Avenue/ Kees Road**

Requests have been received from a number of landowners in Manzeene Avenue and the west end of Kees Road to be allowed to develop the land for more conventional residential development or be included as part of the future residential development area. The land is currently zoned Rural Living and has developed as an attractive rural residential street with houses and outbuildings located at the front of lots with scattered vegetation. The rear of the lots are largely undeveloped. The area is bound by conventional residential development to the east and the Patullos Road/Bacchus Marsh Road future residential development area to the west.

It is recommended that this area is considered in conjunction with the Patullos to Bacchus Marsh Roads Area. Any rezoning would be subject to a Development Plan Overlay to ensure lots are not developed independently and there is an overall integrated plan for the area which considers the movement and open space network and drainage and flooding issues.

### **Future Low Density Residential Development in Lara**

Lara has a small number of low-density residential areas (1 acre size lots) which applies to land that for environmental, servicing, historical or other reasons is not available for conventional residential development. The Archimedes Avenue area and the Kees Road area are the most extensive low density residential areas, with Bath Street area comprising only a small number of lots. These areas have been zoned Low Density for many years.

Locations where the physical or environmental constraints are such that conventional residential development is not possible, but for which there is some capacity to better utilise the land, have been considered in this Structure Plan for inclusion in the Low Density Residential Zone. The proposed locations are set out below.

### **Hopgood Court to Princes Highway Area**

This area is located to the south east of the existing Low Density Residential Zone and east of the existing Residential Zone and comprises rural residential lots (Rural Living) that have not been developed to their full potential. There has been interest from some landowners about the possibility of further subdivision in this area to meet the demand for one acre allotments.

It was previously found this area has drainage issues that would prevent conventional residential development. Prior to any rezoning, issues relating to drainage, particularly downstream to Rennie Street and Hovells Creek would need to be resolved. There is scope to allow the steeper areas to be developed for low density residential development subject to augmentation of the street drains leading

towards Hovells Creek watercourse. It is desirable to maintain a low density buffer to the Princes Highway therefore this area has not been recommended for more intensive residential development. It may be necessary for Council and VicRoads to monitor noise levels in future to determine whether any noise attenuation along the Highway will be required.

It is recommended that the area be rezoned from Rural Living to Low Density Residential with an accompanying Development Plan Overlay or approved subdivision layout.

### **Lewton Avenue Area**

This area is located to the north of the Lara Primary and Secondary schools and the Lara Recreation Reserve. It is a desirable location close to a number of services and facilities however, the Lara Flood Study Part 1 has identified this area (Area 7) as “*extremely flat with limited overland drainage infrastructure*” and suffers from “*lack of grade for flood conveyance*”. The drainage infrastructure required to manage potential flooding means the development potential of this area is limited and opportunities for conventional residential development are limited.

Traffic management around the two schools has been identified as an issue. As part of a residential subdivision a new road located north of the schools could provide a circular access route incorporating a car park for the schools. The Lara Transport Management Plan identifies the need for a new road route and this would also meet the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development policy of not having private cars entering onto school grounds. The alternate option of using Waverley Road to the southeast of schools and Lara Recreation Reserve to resolve traffic issues is less desirable and is not the preferred option.

Once Council further investigates the drainage and traffic issues and these issues can be satisfactorily resolved a rezoning from Rural Living to a Low Density Residential Zone with a Development Plan Overlay or approved subdivision layout can be considered.

### **Future Rural Living / Rural Residential Development in Lara**

Lara is one of the four designated preferred Rural Residential nodes within the municipality. Lara is currently the largest rural residential node within the City of Greater Geelong. The Rural Residential Strategy 1994 describes the Lara node:

*“Lara is the largest Node in the Region and already extends outwards more than 4 kms from its centre. Located near the urban fringe of Geelong, it is tending to merge with urban development such as Heales Road Industrial Area and Avalon Airfield, and other rural residential development in North Corio and Lovely Banks.”*

Lara is a large node that includes extensive expanses around the perimeter of the township where residents are located several kilometres from local facilities. The only possible locations for additional rural living areas are to the extremities of the existing rural living subdivisions. These areas are not recommended for rural residential development as conflicts would arise with:

- Areas of environmental and landscape significance such as Serendip Sanctuary and Hovells Creek.
- Floodprone land.
- Areas affected by the Avalon airport flight paths.
- Areas affected by major industrial activities of the Heales Road Industrial Estate.
- Surrounding agricultural land/uses
- Maintenance of a rural buffer land around the township.

The Rural Residential Strategy (1994) recommends only infill development occurs in Lara due to the above mentioned constraints and to avoid inefficient land use and urban sprawl. The Rural Land Use Strategy (2007) does not advocate for any further Rural Living zoned land within the municipality which also applies to Lara. New rural residential development will be limited to those areas currently zoned Rural Living unsubdivided or undeveloped. The Structure Plan does not provide any further expansion of Rural Living zoned land in Lara.

### **Areas Not Recommended for Rezoning to Residential or Rural Living**

The following areas are not supported for rezoning due to flood and drainage constraints which would require significant land and infrastructure commitments for a comparatively small lot yield:

- Bath Street
- McClelland Avenue between Austin Street and Old Melbourne Road
- Archimedes Avenue
- Hicks Street
- Watt Street
- Elcho and O'Hallorans Roads
- McIntyre Rd/St Andrews Rd (Boomaroo Nursery area)
- Lara Greyhound Education Centre site

The following sites are not recommended for rezoning as it would see conventional residential development extend into rural residential areas which would impact on the rural residential edges around the township and would impact upon the Heales Road industrial buffer:

- Gebbies Rd at corner of Kees Rd
- Forest Road North
- Forest Road South

Some of these areas could be re-investigated in the long term as part of future Structure Plans for potential development opportunities, particularly when more suitable residential land becomes scarcer.

### ***Principles***

- To facilitate appropriate growth which is in keeping with Council's policies on urban growth areas.
- To protect areas identified for longer term urban growth from inappropriate development.
- To ensure all new urban development is undertaken in a sustainable manner having regard to matters, such as, water conservation, stormwater reuse, energy conservation, walkability and connectivity.
- To protect waterways, flood plains, areas of environmental/cultural significance and land with drainage/buffer constraints from inappropriate urban development.

### ***Directions***

- Identify a settlement boundary.
- Direct conventional residential development to Canterbury Road East, Caddys Road, Ponds Drive and Kees Road.
- Direct new low density residential development to the area east of Hopgood Court and Lewton Avenue subject to the resolution of the issues identified in the Structure Plan.
- Support rezoning of identified infill areas to provide for short – medium term growth opportunities with the application of appropriate Development Plan Overlays or approved subdivision layouts based on the principles identified in the Structure Plan.
- Ensure new subdivision proposals include Environmental Sensitive Design, Water Sensitive Urban Design principles and stormwater re-use design techniques.
- Support the implementation of Development Contribution Plans or 173 Agreements to assist in the delivery of infrastructure and community facilities.
- No additional land to be rezoned Rural Living.
- Ensure that Rural Living and Farming zoned areas are not developed in a manner which compromises the future strategic growth opportunities as identified in the Structure Plan.
- Ensure flood prone areas and areas with significant drainage issues are not rezoned for intensive residential purposes.

- Support the construction of a Corangamite Catchment Management Authority standard (design and construction) levee bank on the northern side of Ponds Drive through to Forest Road North.
- Support the investigation of the opportunities and constraints in the Future Residential Development area.

### **3.3.2 Settlement and Housing**

Further concentration of development in the urban area will occur as some areas are rezoned (Residential 1) for more intensive purposes, vacant residential lots are developed and existing housing stock is redeveloped.

Council's adopted Housing Diversity Strategy supports the development of medium density housing within 400 metres walking distance of the town centre, subject to consideration of any site specific constraints.

Given Lara will receive growth in all age cohorts, it is important to ensure the town has a range of housing types to serve the needs of all residents. It is also important affordable housing options are provided particularly when developing new residential areas.

The design of residential subdivisions, whether it is in greenfield or established urban areas, have a significant role in improving the quality of life of the community. Clause 21.30 of Council's Municipal Strategic Statement sets out the guiding principles that will be incorporated into the Development Plans for the identified growth areas including:

- Create strong neighbourhood focal points.
- Contribute to energy conservation through "smart lot design" and solar orientation.
- Integrate public open space into subdivision design.
- Promote permeability and accessibility for residents through interconnected street networks.
- Connect new subdivisions with old.
- Promote a mix of compatible uses and higher densities.
- Promotes public transport access.
- Place less emphasis on the movement of cars and more on the movement of pedestrians and cyclists and
- Enable ease of movement from one community to another.

The use of water sensitive urban design techniques in new residential subdivisions as part of the management of urban stormwater will also be required.

The City of Greater Geelong Residential Character Study – Character Precinct Brochures 2003 has outlined the following vision statement for Lara:

*Lara will retain and strengthen its identity as a country township surrounded by open rural land, and its diversity will be unified by:*

- *Ensuring the siting of buildings to reflect spacing patterns.*
- *Ensuring building form and scale reflects predominant patterns.*
- *Encouraging the use of indigenous and native vegetation in public and private planting schemes.*
- *Encouraging open front boundary treatments.*

Where new development falls within an existing precinct regard must be given to the preferred character statement. The development of new areas for which there are no preferred character statements, should implement the elements of the Lara township vision.



The Outer Areas Heritage Study recommends 59 culturally significant heritage places in Lara be included in the Scheme for statutory heritage protection from demolition and inappropriate development or alteration that could adversely affect their cultural significance. The Structure Plan recommends the implementation of heritage protection over these sites.

### ***Principles***

- Ensure that future housing development complements the character of the town and provides for a variety of housing sizes and types including affordable housing.
- Ensure that new subdivisions incorporate sustainability principles including energy efficiency, connectivity and water management.
- Ensure that new subdivision provide for community safety.

### ***Directions***

- Encourage medium density development within 400 metres of an activity centre.
- Encourage a diverse range of housing types.
- Ensure new residential subdivisions comply with the design principles outlined in Clause 21.30 of the Municipal Strategic Statement and the Residential Character Vision Statement for Lara.
- Ensure new subdivision proposals include Environmental Sensitive Design, Water Sensitive Urban Design principles and stormwater re-use design techniques.
- Ensure new subdivision and development proposals incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CEPTED) and Healthy by Design principles.
- Provide for the protection for the identified post contact cultural heritage sites in the Outer Areas Heritage Study through the implementation of a heritage overlay.
- Support the preparation and implementation of the G21 Affordable Housing Strategy including the appointment of a Registered Housing Association.

### ***3.3.3 Economic Development and Employment***

The economic future and generation of employment within Lara will rely largely on the town centre, the Heales Road Industrial Estate, Boomaroo Nursery, Avalon Airport and a potential intermodal transport facility.

#### **Land Use Directions**

##### Existing Commercial Land

The Lara town centre is a neighbourhood centre serving the local population and outlying rural areas including Little River and Avalon. The centre contains 5,100sqm of retail floor space including a supermarket of 1,450sqm (a full-line supermarket is around 3,000-3,500sqm), ranges of non-retail services such as bank, real estate, medical and professional offices, a small shopping strip in Patullos Road and commercial land around the train station.

The economic analysis 'Lara Structure Plan Retail Development Issues (2009) prepared by economist Tim Nott as part of the Structure Plan development estimates escape expenditure in the Lara trade area at 79%, this is particularly high given the trade area population. The shops in Lara only supply 31% of the value of food and groceries to local people. Typically, neighbourhood centres are established to cater to the convenience retail needs of residents, especially their needs for food and groceries and usually supply over 50% of the food and grocery needs of local residents.

In order for the Lara town centre to better serve the needs of residents, the economic analysis suggests.... *'Lara could support a further 6,800 sq m of retail floorspace by 2021. Of this, 3,300 sq m would be in food and grocery retailing. This would be sufficient to allow development of a full line supermarket in Lara in addition to the existing supermarket.... If the existing supermarket were to expand, there is adequate demand to support its growth to a full-line supermarket immediately.'*

The 2007 Lara Structure Plan advocated for a full-line supermarket and the expansion of the existing town centre through the development and implementation of the Lara Town Centre Urban Design Framework (2006) which aims to enhance and consolidate the existing town centre. The retail analysis confirms the Urban Design Framework can deliver the retail floor space requirements until 2021.

#### The Lara Town Centre Urban Design Framework (UDF)

The adopted UDF maintains the existing town centre and adjacent railway station precinct as the focus for commercial development within the township to foster vitality and avoid the fragmentation of uses and activities.

There are limited opportunities to expand the town centre within the existing business zoned land. The UDF proposes expanding the current town centre into the adjoining Crown owned Austin Park. A Master Plan has been developed for the area (see Figures 2, 3 and 4) which includes rearranging the surrounding road network, relocating the bowling club, creating a more useable and functional parkland, a town square, additional carparking, increased office and retail space including a full line supermarket, town square, new library and emergency services hub.

Four key aims and associated strategies have been identified to improve the town centre as part of the UDF including:

#### *1. Facilitate future growth*

- Upgrade the train station precinct
- Improve services in the town centre
- Increase lifestyle choice
- Provide additional office or non-retail space
- Promote the development of new retail facilities

#### *2. Reduce escape expenditure*

- Increase retail offer and choice in the town centre
- Increase car park efficiency
- Increase the number of car parking spaces
- Create a successful movement network
- Facilitate town centre management
- Promote events

#### *3. Promote Sustainable transport, access and movement*

- Create a new Transit Interchange at the Lara station
- Expand the number of commuter car parks at the transport interchange
- Enhance links and access to the Transit Interchange
- Promote pedestrian and bicycle connections in and around the town centre

#### *4. Enhance and strengthen the public realm*

- Enhance Austin Park
- Create social spaces
- Introduce new coordinated street furniture
- Extend the shelter
- Improve footpath surfaces
- Improve lighting
- Balance the needs of pedestrians and cars
- Enhance interpretation and directional pedestrian signage

Council is currently pursuing the purchase of Austin Park from the Crown to allow the project to move forward, however, this may take some time. In the meantime the relevant agreements and processes are being undertaken in order to have the site 'market ready' for when the purchase of Austin Park is finalised.

The Structure Plan supports the implementation of the Lara Town Centre UDF as the best option to cater for resident needs and consolidate activity in the existing centre which will have the following benefits:

- Create more sustainable urban development by enabling multi-purpose trips by consumers and thereby reducing energy use;
- Generate more customers for traders by concentrating activities together, encouraging the highest possible level of service consistent with commercial viability;
- Enable more efficient delivery of infrastructure and
- Provide more security for investors that their assets will retain value over the long term, which, other things being equal, encourages investment.

#### Expansion of the existing Supermarket

Any alternate options to deliver enhanced retail options in the short term including an expansion of the existing supermarket or car parking into the adjacent road reserve are considered inferior options and it is recommended they not be pursued unless the Lara town centre UDF recommendations are unable to be realised due to unforeseen circumstances.

#### Patulous Road

This small retail strip, known as the Six Ways, is outside the retail core of the town centre and comprises of 800sqm floor space and is almost fully tenanted. There are limited expansion opportunities for this site and no expansion is proposed as part of the Structure Plan.

#### Other Retail Options

There is potential for a new neighbourhood activity centre to accommodate the retail needs of residents outside the existing centre. A new supermarket-based centre would most likely include a range of specialty shops and, judging by the formats developed elsewhere, would probably have a retail floor area in the range 4,000 to 6,500 sq m. The economic analysis prepared for the Structure Plan indicates there are several difficulties with this proposal including:

- The length of time required for a rezoning to accommodate a significant activity centre is likely to be a minimum of 18 months and could be as long as 30 months. This could be comparable with the time required for acquisition of Austin Park to accommodate Council's preferred solution.
- There is no guarantee that a Panel convened to adjudicate the requested rezoning would recommend in its favour. Panel members would need to be convinced that State policies supporting the rational development of activity centres were satisfied and that the likely impact on the existing town centre was acceptable.
- If approved, a new neighbourhood activity centre with a full-line supermarket would tend to replace the existing town centre over time. Shoppers would be likely to use the new centre in preference to the existing town centre because of the superior food and grocery offering. This factor would induce investment in the new centre and over time, activity would drift from the town centre to the new centre. The existing town centre would decline, with remaining property owners and operators experiencing a loss in revenues and asset values. If restrictions were put in place to protect the existing town centre (such as retail floor space limits on the new centre), it would be likely that neither centre would achieve its full potential and that the service to local residents would be never be as good as it could be.

The introduction of a new activity centre into a trade area already served by a centre at a similar level in the retail hierarchy will create inefficiencies and confusion amongst consumers and investors. The provision of higher order services would be delayed until it became clear which centre was dominant. It is not considered an out of centre retail development is appropriate at this time as it could compromise the realisation of the UDF plan.

It may be appropriate to consider a new small scale neighbourhood activity centre as part of the planning for the long term growth area to the west of the township to serve the daily and weekly convenience needs of residents. This will need to be investigated as part of the development of the growth area.

#### Light Industry / Periphery Sales (Restricted- Retail)

Expansion of the town centre will provide the opportunity for retail type businesses operating in the service business estate to relocate freeing up some of the Business 4 zoned land. There is an opportunity to further develop the Business 4 zoned area and to expand the Station precinct along McClelland Avenue, Mill Road and the railway reserve. Expansion of this estate is constrained by residential uses to the east, drainage issues to the north and McClelland Avenue to the south. The only possible area for expansion is onto under utilised railway land. The locational advantages of this site are:

- It is adjacent to the railway line and opposite the existing service business estate.
- It does not adjoin residential or rural living areas and residential uses are not recommended for this location.
- Other alternatives are being considered and ear-marked for retailing in the township – retail uses are therefore not proposed.
- Traffic will not impact on adjoining residential areas.
- The land is not required as open space.

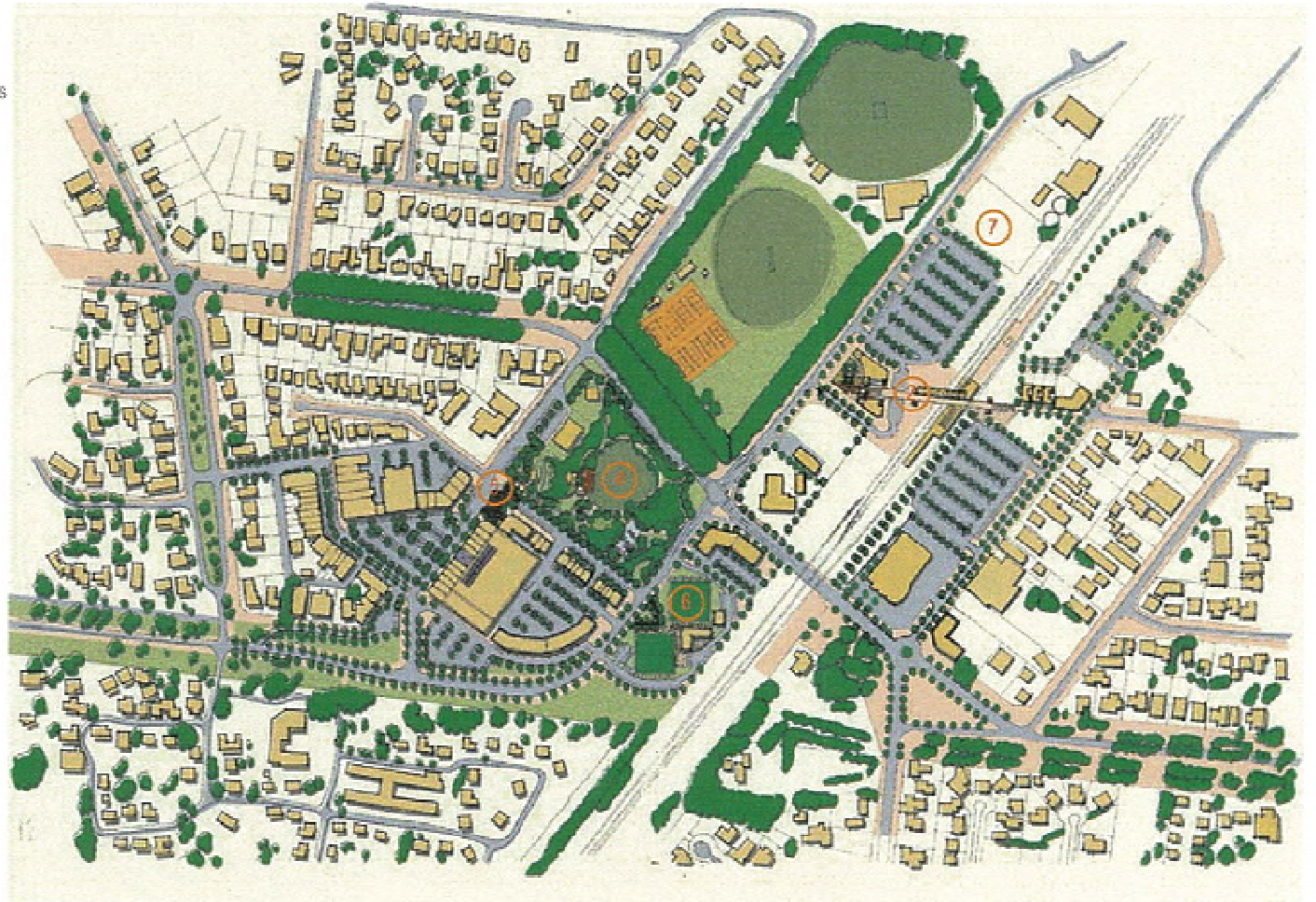
Expansion of the Business 4 zoned precinct could be considered on the unused railway reserve land if the land is declared surplus to need by the land owner, VicTrack. It is recommended a Design and Development Overlay accompany any rezoning to ensure appropriate landscaping and design treatments at key interfaces.



The Centroway town centre and adjoining Austin Park. The Lara Town Centre UDF proposes reconfiguring Austin Park to allow retail expansion including civic facilities such as a town square and library.

Figure 2 - Lara Town Centre UDF Master Plan

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Civic         | Improvements                                |
| ①             | Town Centre Public Realm                    |
| ②             | Transit Interchange and Pedestrian Overpass |
| ③             | Car Park Management                         |
| Public Domain | Projects                                    |
| ④             | Austin Park                                 |
| ⑤             | Town Square                                 |
| Development   | Opportunities                               |
| ⑥             | Bowling Club                                |
| ⑦             | Emergency Services Hub                      |



**Figure 3 - Lara Town Centre West UDF Master Plan**

- ① Large format retail stores of around 500m<sup>2</sup> or a larger format retailer (such as a Country Target) in the existing Safeway building.
- ② Office or non-retail space within the centre
- ③ Enlarged central car park with double the current capacity (145 spaces).
- ④ New Emergency Services Hub - site may be required to be larger than identified or in a different location. Commuter car park space could be utilised for this purpose
- ⑤ New library (600m<sup>2</sup>)
- ⑥ 1,100m<sup>2</sup> new speciality shops
- ⑦ Larger format retail stores/showrooms
- ⑧ 3,500m<sup>2</sup> full line supermarket
- ⑨ Motel
- ⑩ Town Square
- ⑪ Reshaped and reconfigured Austin Park creating a more usable, functional space.



- ⑫ New Bowling Club
- ⑬ New Transit Interchange includes retail floor space, overpass, lifts, public open space, feature towers and landscape
- ⑭ Larger format retail store, showroom or other commercial
- ⑮ New commuter parking with significant landscaping
- ⑯ Office/Retail
- ⑰ Existing APCO service station - should be relocated to a more appropriate location in the future

Figure 4 - Lara Town Centre East UDF Master Plan

- ① New medium density residential
- ② New Transit Interchange including overpass and lifts
- ③ Existing station platforms
- ④ Expanded commuter car park
- ⑤ Pedestrian link to station - improved lighting and landscape
- ⑥ New retail/showroom premises - provides an active edge, surveillance and shelter to the street



### Industrial Land

Lara is strategically located between Geelong and Melbourne with excellent links to road, rail, port and airport infrastructure. These attributes make it a prime location for transport and freight type operations and affiliated businesses. The development of the Heales Road Industrial Estate and potentially an intermodal transport facility means Lara is well placed to attract investment and employment opportunities in this sector.

It is not proposed to have any expansion of industrial zones in the Lara township itself. The industries in Old Melbourne Road are relatively self-contained and it is recommended that no further expansion occur in this area.

### Heales Road Industrial Estate

Major industrial development will be directed to the Heales Road Industrial Estate to the south of Lara. The Structure Plan supports the maintenance the rural buffer between Heales Road and the Lara township to the north to protect the development and operational potential. The Heales Road Industrial Estate Framework Plan (2007) has been adopted to guide the development of this area and includes a Master Plan.

### Intermodal Transport Facility

There is potential to develop an intermodal transport facility on a privately owned site at the north-east end of Lara just outside the settlement boundary. The site is well located to Geelong and Melbourne with good rail and road links and proximity to the Heales Road Industrial Estate, Avalon Airport and the port of Geelong. It has the potential to make a positive contribution to the economy and employment and the long term supply of industrial land in the very significant northern part of the municipality. Rezoning the site in order to facilitate the development of the terminal would be subject to economic, social and environmental considerations. The Geelong Intermodal Freight Terminal Feasibility Study (2007), the draft Lara Intermodal Industrial Estate Economic Impact Assessment – Supply Report (2008) and the Lara Intermodal Terminal Development Master Plan – opportunities and constraints (2009) which includes a Development Opportunity Plan have been completed as part of the investigation of this opportunity. The Structure plan supports the further work required to fully investigate and take advantage of this opportunity.

### Avalon Airport

Avalon Airport is a major economic, employment and tourism asset to the region. In order to protect the integrity, operating capacity and potential for future development of the facility it should be protected and existing buffer areas for safe operation maintained. It is recommended an Airport Environs Overlay be implemented to ensure inappropriate uses and development do not encroach on and potentially restrict airport operations.

It is also recommended support be given to the development of Avalon Airports Master Plan and bid to establish the facility as an international airfreight centre and international passenger terminal.



## Future Development

Industrial development will be directed to Heales Road, west of the Lara township and potentially an intermodal transport facility located north-east of the township. These sites, along with Avalon Airport provide major economic and employment opportunities and the Structure Plan seeks to protect and promote these opportunities.

There are a number of constraints and opportunities for potential development around the Lara township. These constraints and opportunities can be seen on Map 2. A key opportunity is identified on land adjacent to Avalon Airport fronting the Princes Highway. There is potential for airport associated/compatible uses to be developed, subject to any proposal meeting the criteria set out below. Council would require a detailed proposal prior to considering any development and rezoning proposal.

New development and/or rezoning proposals outside the settlement boundary must be carefully considered and must have regard for the following:

- Economic factors such as current industrial land/lot supply to avoid an oversupply of land that may impact on the viability and success of Heales Road and the potential intermodal terminal facility.
- Potential drainage issues and land subject to flooding and inundation
- Impacts on the operation of Avalon Airport including flight paths and expansion potential
- Environmental factors such as impacts on Hovells Creek and Limeburners Bay including Ramsar wetland sites
- Social impacts such as employment creation
- Residential amenity impacts
- Buffers to sensitive land uses and appropriate interface treatments to adjoining properties
- Visual and landscape impacts from residential properties, the Freeway and ensuring the entrance to Geelong/Lara remains attractive to create a positive image for Geelong and the region.



The proximity of Avalon Airport to Lara provides opportunities for further economic development and employment opportunities.



### ***Principles***

- To consolidate The Centreway as the primary commercial centre in Lara and encourage a diverse mix of uses and activities within the Lara town centre.
- To increase retail opportunities in the town centre and reduce escape expenditure.
- To encourage development in the town centre which enhances its appearance and functionality to create a thriving and vibrant town centre.
- To provide opportunities for employment and investment to the region.
- To protect industrial and airport precincts from inappropriate land use and development which may impact on development and operating potential.
- To maintain an attractive rural landscape at the northern entrance to the township.

### ***Directions***

- Support the implementation of the Lara Town Centre Urban Design Framework Master Plan, including rezoning land in Waverley Street and Austin Park to Business 1.
- Discourage the development of an out of town neighbourhood centre.
- Contain growth of the shopping area at the Patullos Road – Forest Road Intersection.
- Limit further expansion of Industrial 1 or Industrial 3 zones within the township.
- Maintain the buffer between the Heales Road Industrial Estate and the Lara township to the north.
- Support the development, infrastructure delivery and marketing of the Heales Road Industrial Estate.
- Support Avalon Airport in developing a master plan for the site including an option for an international passenger terminal, expansion of domestic passenger services, aircraft maintenance activities and other appropriate commercial development.
- Ensure the use and development of land surrounding Avalon Airport does not prejudice current or future operations (or associated activities).
- Support the establishment of an Airport Environs Overlay for and surrounding Avalon Airport.
- Support the further work required to rezone land and establish the intermodal transport facility at the preferred Lara site subject to the considerations identified in the Structure Plan.

### **3.3.4 Infrastructure**

#### **Development Contributions**

Funding of infrastructure is increasingly based on user pays principles, which is accepted as a legitimate means of providing the necessary capital for new infrastructure and maintenance of existing infrastructure.

It is Council policy to make maximum use of special rates and charges schemes under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1989. These schemes are applied in existing developed or subdivided areas which lack necessary urban infrastructure, such as, sealed roads, footpaths, kerb and channel, and drainage.

A common factor of such schemes is that where property owners benefit from the works, they contribute to the cost. Council has formulated a policy, known as the Comprehensive Infrastructure Funding Policy (CIFP) to guide levels of landowner and Council contributions toward the cost of works.

To provide equitable assistance with infrastructure funding in the municipality, the City of Greater Geelong has resolved to implement Development Contributions Plans (DCPs) or 173 agreements in appropriate locations. A DCP is a statutory tool used to impose levies on the proponents of new developments, to obtain fair and reasonable contributions towards specified, prescheduled infrastructure, including facilities and works. Such schemes could be implemented in Lara to assist meeting the infrastructure requirements of the township.

As part of rezoning applications Council will pursue a \$900 per residential lot as a minimum contribution towards community facilities or upgrades and a minimum area of 10% (unless otherwise negotiated) to be set aside for public open space.

### **Community and Recreation Needs**

The Lara Community Infrastructure Analysis (2008) has identified the current and future needs of the community based on population trends. The recommendations of the Analysis, including the creation of seven 'community hubs' and establishing a branch library will help provide the services and facilities required to service the town in an equitable and practical way consistent with the community needs identified in the Structure Plan. The proposed hubs are set out in Figure 5 below.

The UDF proposes the construction of a permanent library and town square.

The Open Space Networks Study (2001) and the Lara Recreation Facilities Study (2007) provides an assessment of the existing facilities in Lara and the facilities required to meet the communities current and future recreation needs. The actions included in these Studies are supported as being consistent with resident needs identified through the Structure Plan and if implemented would be of significant benefit as better linkages and improved recreation facilities and opportunities would be provided for the community.

Council may be able to acquire land or the provision of infrastructure and/or facilities as part of a development contribution. A regional soccer facility has been identified in the Recreation Study as being a priority and the provision of or contribution towards this could be investigated as part of a development contribution.

Council has recently purchased land adjacent to the Lara Recreation Reserve to incorporate it into the Reserve. Master plans have been developed to show how the land could be developed for short and long term outcomes (Figures 6 & 7 below). This land is currently zoned Rural Living and will need to be rezoned to Public Park and Recreation to facilitate development. There is still one privately owned parcel of land among the Council owned land and Council should pursue acquiring this site so it can be incorporated into the reserve.

The Grand Lakes Estate has notionally nominated a potential education facility location. This opportunity will need to be investigated with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). Education opportunities will also need to be investigated as part of the medium-long term growth area.



This plan has been developed in order to indicate interim measures to cater for soccer, until permanent, dedicated soccer facilities can be established at an alternative location (i.e. off Canterbury Road East).

**Soccer Pitch #1**

Establish Oval #2 as the number one soccer pitch. Allocate water for irrigation as part of the City's sportsground water allocation from Barwon Water in order to establish and sustain an effective playing surface.

**Soccer Pitch #2**

Establish Oval #3 as a second soccer pitch for shared use with football and other users.

**Soccer Pitch #3**

Establish the Lara Primary School junior oval and soccer pitch. Apply for a water use exemption from Barwon Water in order to establish an effective playing surface.

**Car park #4**

Additional car parking is needed to cater for immediate demand. Seal the existing gravel car park adjacent to Oval #3 to provide 49 formalised car spaces. Consider options to formalise/improve internal car parking and traffic management around the LSC facilities (i.e. between Oval 1 & 2 and under the tree line parallel to Mill Road).

**LARA MASTERPLAN short term option**





LARA MASTERPLAN long term option

**SUGGESTED TREE SPECIES**

● Yellow Box	<i>Eucalyptus melliodora</i>
● Grey Box	<i>Eucalyptus microcarpa</i>
● Yellow Gum River Red Lightwood Black Wattle Blackwood Golden Wattle Bullock Drooping Sheoak	<i>Eucalyptus leucocylon</i> ssp <i>zonata</i> <i>Gum Eucalyptus cinnamomifera</i> <i>Acacia stipularis</i> <i>Acacia melanoxylon</i> <i>Acacia mangium</i> <i>Acacia pyramidalis</i> <i>Allocasuarina uliginosa</i> <i>Allocasuarina verticillata</i>

1. **New Multi-Purpose Oval**
  - Establish a new senior sized multi use playing field, primarily to cater for future Australian Rules Football and cricket demand.
  - Include a perimeter path around the oval, with connections to the proposed new car paths.
  - Protective barrier netting may be required behind the southern goals to prevent balls entering neighbouring properties.
  - Install tree planting and landscaping as appropriate.
2. **New Baseball Facilities**
  - Install training lights to the existing baseball diamond.
  - Establish a batting cage for baseball training.
3. **New Change Room and Amenities Building**

A new multi-use change room and amenities building will be developed to service the proposed new oval, baseball fields and Oval #3.

The pavilion is subject to detailed design, however is likely to include a minimum of 6 change rooms (some of which may be divisible to create additional rooms if needed), player shower and toilet facilities (i.e. consider a central block of cubicle showers for use by all groups), umpires change rooms, first aid room, canteen facility, storage area, utility/cleaners rooms, public toilets and under cover standing area (total size approximately 500sqm).
4. **New Car Parking**
  - Three new sealed car parking areas are proposed. The northern car park will cater for approximately 200 cars, the southern car park will cater for approximately 180 cars and the one off Alkars Ave #5.
  - Soften car parking areas with landscaping and tree planting as appropriate.
  - Formalise reserve access off MB Road.
  - Service and emergency vehicle access will be provided to the proposed new change room and amenities building via the northern car park.
5. **Lara Primary School**
  - In partnership with Lara Primary School, upgrade the existing cricket oval for use by junior sports (football and cricket) as well as establish a new soccer pitch (senior size) along the eastern side.
  - Protective barrier netting may be required between the proposed new soccer pitch and the existing baseball diamond.
6. **Netball Courts**
  - Retain existing two netball courts for shared school and community use. Consider the long term establishment of a further two netball courts within the existing private property off Alkars Avenue if acquired by Council.
7. **Existing Oval #3**
  - Retain Oval #3 for shared cricket and football use (this oval will also be used as the primary soccer pitch until alternative facilities are developed - refer to the Master Plan report).
  - Install a small under cover standing area (pergola) on the eastern side of the oval.
  - Review long-term demand for training lights on Oval 3.
8. **Walking Paths**
  - Establish walking paths throughout the reserve, including connections to key facilities and infrastructure.
9. **Landscaping**
  - Install tree planting and landscaping as indicated, use of native and indigenous species are preferred.
10. **Future Passive Open Space**
  - Council should proactively pursue options for the purchase of this site, if acquired, the site should be developed for two netball courts, car parking and passive open space facilities such as playground, park furniture and landscaping.
11. **Undeveloped Open Space**
  - Retain an undeveloped open space for a range of flexible uses (Refer to main report P. 15).



## Movement

A number of traffic and movement issues were identified as part of the Lara Transport Management Plan (2003) including heavy vehicle movement, intersection crossings, speed limits, bicycle and pedestrian access, poor public transport options and access to key sites such as schools and the town centre. A number of recommendations have been made to address these (see Map 3) and if implemented would improve safety, connectivity and efficiency around the township consistent with the Structure Plans identification of the needs of the community.

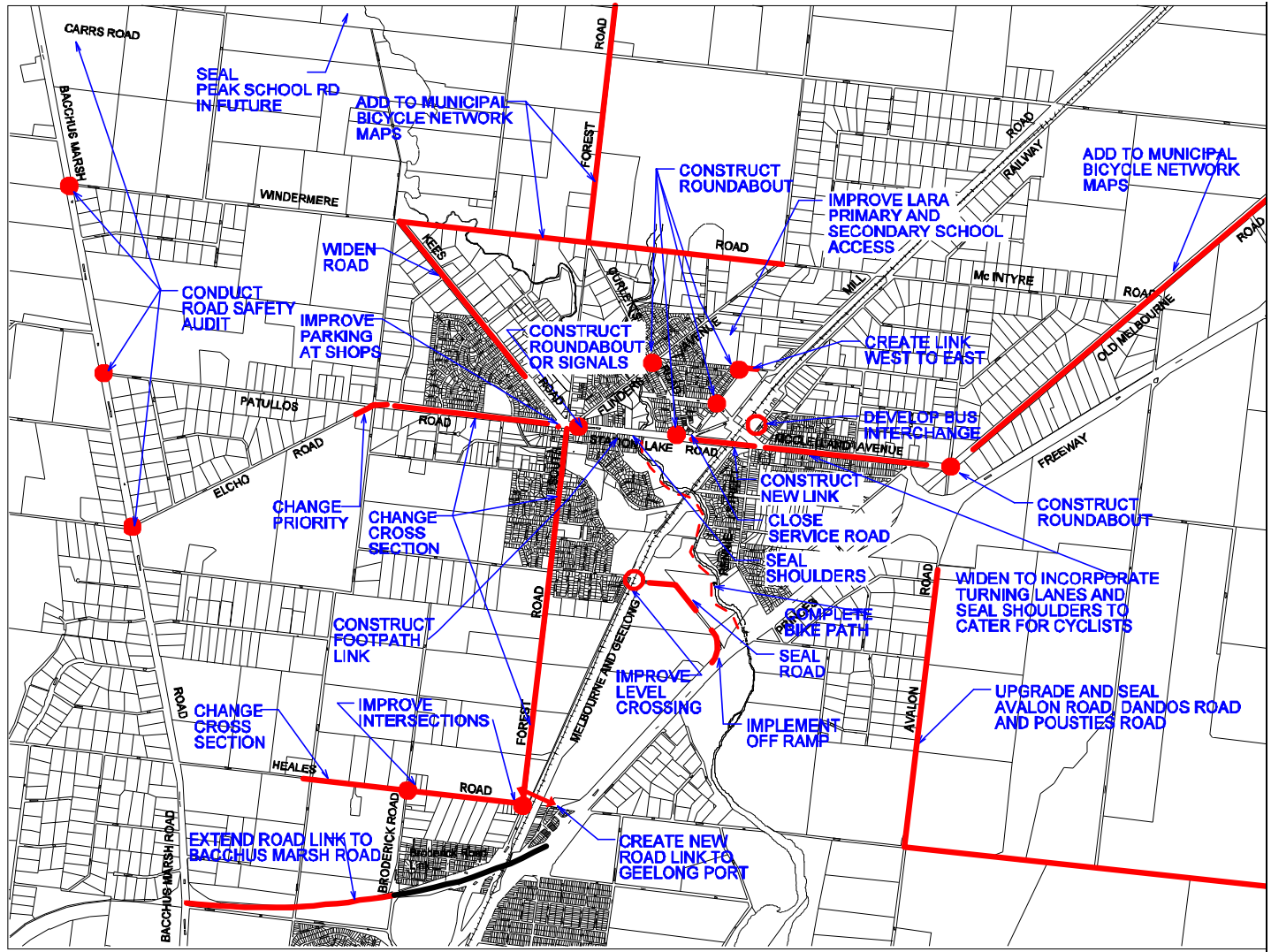
The UDF proposes upgrading the Lara Train Station into a state of the art transit interchange. This involves increasing carparking, landscaping, connections to the town centre and public transport services. It could also include some commercial floor space, kiosk and pedestrian overpass. It also recommends investigating transport options from the Lara town centre to Avalon Airport.

Traffic management around the Lara Primary School and Lara Secondary College is a significant issue for parents, students, Council, the schools and DEECD. The combination of two schools at the one site, similar pick-up times and lack of road frontages creates traffic congestion and safety concerns for all. It is recognised that there is a need to provide a safe and relatively convenient location for drop/off pick-up. An area to the north of the primary school off Lewton Road is considered to be the appropriate location for a road, school bus interchange and car park and would benefit both student and parent safety. A school bus interchange could potentially be incorporated into the Lara Recreation Reserve, these options will need to be considered as part of any rezoning or redevelopment.



The upgraded Lara Train Station including new bus stop and station building.

### Map 3 – Transport Management Plan





### ***Principles***

- To encourage the provision of a range of social and community services commensurate with the size and role of the township.
- To provide adequate levels of public open space, both within the existing and proposed residential areas, to cater for the passive and active recreation needs of the community.
- To provide appropriate infrastructure such as drainage, water supply, sewerage, electricity, gas, telecommunications and footpaths in new residential areas.
- To ensure new development adequately addresses stormwater drainage and incorporates water sensitive urban design principles.
- To provide an improved transport network which includes better traffic movements, pedestrian and cyclist linkages and public transport options.

### ***Directions***

- Support the use of Development Plan Contributions or 173 Agreements to provide community and other infrastructure.
- Pursue a \$900 per lot contribution and a 10% open space contribution (unless otherwise negotiated) as part of residential rezoning applications.
- Support the ongoing upgrading of existing open space, leisure and recreation areas undertaken for and on behalf of public land managers.
- Pursue purchasing the privately owned property on Alkara Ave to incorporate into the Lara Recreation Reserve in accordance with the Master Plan in the Lara Recreation Facilities Study and rezone the land to Public Park and Recreation (PPRZ).
- Investigate opportunities for a school bus interchange as part of the Lara Recreation Reserve redevelopment or as part of a residential rezoning for the Lewton Avenue Area.
- Support the implementation of the Master Plans and associated facility provision set out in the Lara Outdoor Recreation Study 2007.
- Support the development of the community hubs, infrastructure and service provision consistent with the Community Analysis Study 2008.
- Support the establishment of a temporary library and continue to pursue a permanent site as part of the Urban Design Framework.
- Support the redevelopment of the Lara Train Station to create a high quality transport interchange which integrates trains, buses, bikes, pedestrians, taxis, private vehicles and links to Avalon Airport.
- Support and implement the recommendations of the Lara Transport Management Plan 2003.
- Support the development, and implement the findings of a strategic footpaths policy to achieve better pedestrian and cycle linkages throughout the town.
- Support the recommendations of the City of Greater Geelong Cycle Strategy 2007.

### 3.3.5 Natural Environment

The natural landscape in and around the Lara provides an attractive rural setting and distinctive character to the township. The You Yangs is a major landmark associated with the town providing attractive views as well as having environmental, recreational and cultural importance.

Areas with environmental and landscape values often have cultural heritage significance particularly around waterways so it is essential to manage and protect these areas in a way that respects the indigenous community. Hovells Creek and Serendip Creek are two waterways that run through the township and into Limeburners Bay. Both these creeks are liable to flooding, although the intensity and type of flooding varies and any urban development must have consideration to these flooding issues.



Hovells Creek  
flowing into  
Limeburners Bay

Public land managers such as City of Greater Geelong and Parks Victoria manage key sites such as Limeburners Bay, Serendip Sanctuary, You Yangs and the Brisbane Ranges. These land managers will ensure the long-term protection of the significant environmental values of these areas through their sensitive on-going maintenance while providing, where appropriate, interpretation, community access to, and good linkages across, public land.

The propensity for land to flood or be inundated is a common feature of Lara as it is located on the lower reaches of Hovells Creek where it joins Serendip Creek. Not all flooding in Lara is caused by significant rainfall events, lack of overland flood conveyance and lack of grade for underground drainage systems also affect parts of Lara. Flood mitigation options can be implemented to reduce the effects of flooding in a particular area and enable some development to occur. This is usually only effective when the costs of the measures can be borne by the benefiting development. The Planning Scheme needs to accurately identify those areas affected by flooding and inundation maps and overlays should be updated accordingly.

New residential development should incorporate best practice water sensitive urban design principles to manage stormwater, drainage and flood mitigation. This is particularly important in Lara given stormwater is discharged to Limeburners Bay which is a Ramsar site recognised for its ecological, biodiversity and habitat importance. A Limeburners Bay Management Plan is being developed to assist in managing this site through catchment management and once finalised will set out recommendations to protect the area.

#### ***Principles***

- To protect, rehabilitate, enhance and interpret the towns environmental attributes so that future generations may experience them.
- To ensure environmentally sensitive areas including Hovells Creek and Limeburners Bay, Serendip Sanctuary, You Yangs, grasslands, remnant vegetation and Brisbane Ranges are protected and managed.
- To protect flood plains and allow the passage of flood waters.
- To ensure down stream stormwater flows are managed to protect waterways and coastal areas.

### ***Directions***

- Support public land managers in the ongoing management and enhancement of public land.
- Provide for the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage areas including community education, interpretation and awareness.
- Encourage retention and enhancement of existing vegetation on private land, roadsides, rail reserves and other reserves.
- Support the introduction of planning scheme controls over flood and inundation prone areas, biodiversity sites and networks to protect existing values and future enhancement of these values.
- Ensure no further subdivision or inappropriate development occurs within flood prone or environmentally sensitive areas.
- Encourage the implementation of water sensitive urban design measures for drainage and stormwater, energy conservation and water reuse within all residential and commercial development.
- Support the preparation and implementation of a management plan for Limeburners Bay.

### **3.3.6 Rural Areas**

The rural hinterland surrounding Lara is a key component to its landscape setting and character. Designation of an urban settlement boundary will ensure that rural land is protected from the ad-hoc conversion to residential activity.

The Rural Land Use Strategy (2007) proposes the northern end of the municipality (which includes Lara) be maintained for agricultural uses. There are opportunities for the use of reclaimed water around Balliang for horticulture and for some intensive animal industries subject to compliance with relevant Codes of Practice and landscape impact considerations. The Strategy also recommends development adjacent to the You Yangs and Brisbane Ranges be limited and carefully managed to protect these features.

Avalon Airport is a significant State and regional transport facility. In relation to rural strategies for Geelong and the wider region there are significant opportunities to utilise this facility to export high quality produce. The Rural Land Use Strategy (2007) recommends the integrity, operating capacity and potential for development of the airport facility is protected and existing buffer areas for its safe operation be maintained. In terms of rural land to the east and south of the Princes Highway immediately adjoining the Avalon Airport it is recommended that any future land use needs to be associated and/or compatible with airport operations.

The Greyhound Industry makes an important and significant contribution to the local and regional economy. The focus of the greyhound industry is in the area around the Lara Greyhound Education Centre located on the eastern fringe of the Lara township. This area is currently zoned Farming Zone which is considered the most suitable zone for such operations under Councils proposed Local Planning Policy Dog Keeping and Racing Dog Training (Clause 22.07 under Amendment C129 currently being considered for adoption) and the Rural Land Use Strategy. Clause 22.07 provides direction on the location, design and siting and managing amenity impacts of dog training/racing/keeping facilities and also sets out permit application and assessment criteria. The Farming Zone is nominated as the preferred location for such facilities.

Boomaroo Nurseries is one of Australia's largest seedling suppliers, supplying around 250 million seedlings to vegetable growers in South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria providing a significant boost to local employment and the economy. This area is outside the current settlement boundary and it is considered the Farming Zone is the most appropriate zone for this area. The Farming Zone will protect agricultural opportunities and protect land within influence of Avalon Airport from inappropriate use and/or development.



Intensive horticulture production in Lara

The Rural Land Use Strategy does not recommend rezoning land to Rural Living and no new Rural Living zoned land is provided for in the Structure Plan. The State Planning Policy Framework sets out the considerations for Rural Living development which includes the objectives set out in Ministerial Direction 6.

A long held planning principle of the Geelong Region has been to retain a non-urban break between Geelong and Melbourne and similar breaks between the townships within the Region. The separation of Geelong from Melbourne/Werribee has been an important planning principle for a number of reasons:

- It ensures Geelong retains its own image and identity.
- It gives a sense of containment to the urban sprawl.
- It ensures that environmentally sensitive areas such as the You Yangs and Ramsar Wetlands continue to be protected.
- It protects the Avalon Airfield from encroaching residential and rural residential development.
- It ensures that the Melbourne Water sewerage treatment complex and farm are protected from urban encroachment and
- It maintains rural farming areas for agricultural purposes.

For rural areas outside the Settlement Boundaries, other than those of high environmental and/or landscape significance, opportunities exist for small scale farm base tourism activities such as B&B's, group accommodation, food and wine production. Suitability of non-farming activities will depend on issues such as current policy and zoning requirements, environmental, social and economic impacts and impacts on existing rural production.

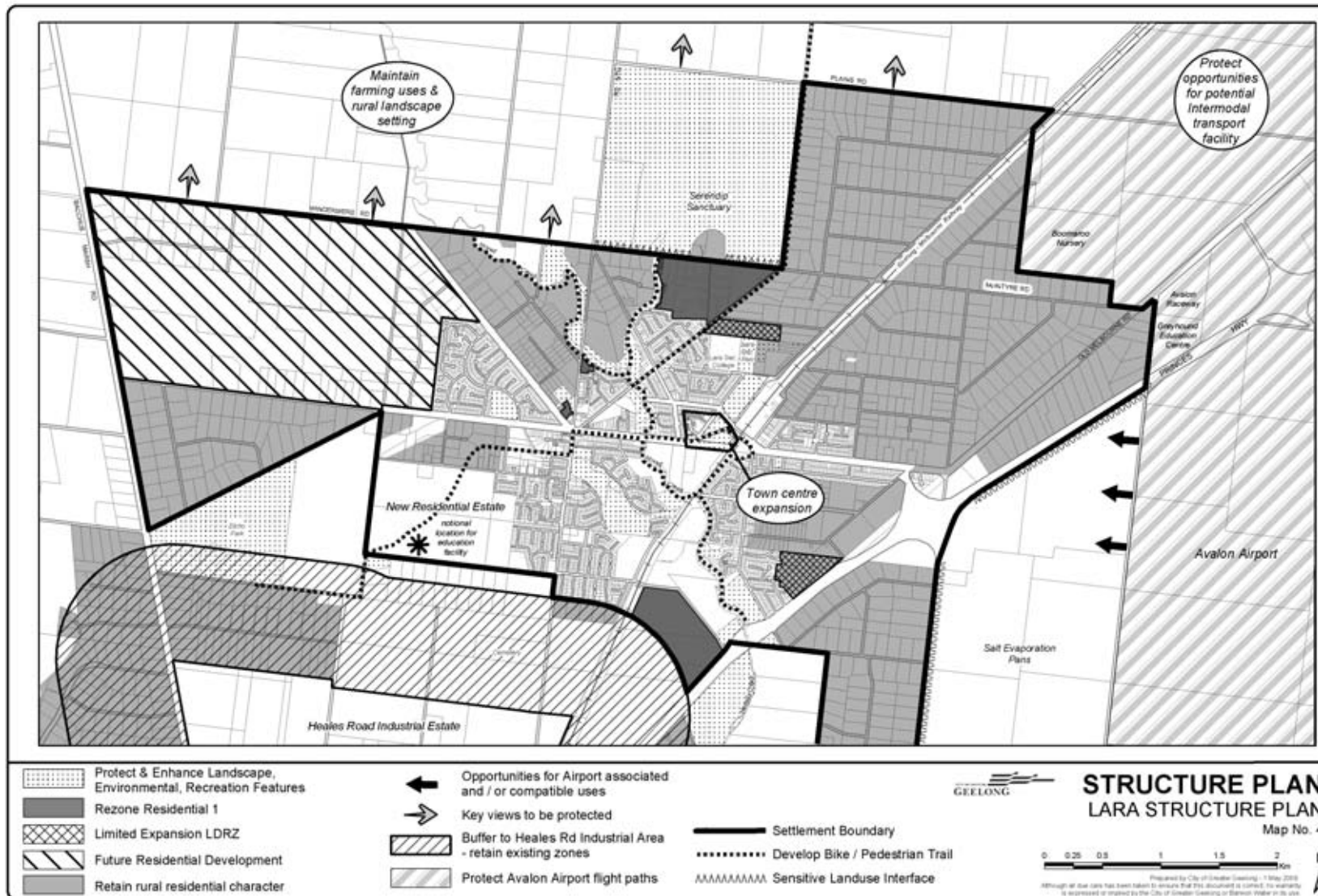
### ***Principles***

- To ensure that the surrounding rural landscape and setting of Lara is preserved.
- To protect agricultural land for agricultural purposes.
- To ensure the land use and development within those areas currently zoned Farming do not jeopardise future growth areas of the town.

### ***Directions***

- Retain the existing Farming Zone outside the settlement boundary, including no further expansion to the Rural Living Zone;
- Designate an urban settlement boundary to protect rural land from urban encroachment.
- Discourage activities on the periphery of the settlement boundary which compromise residential amenity, the non-urban break, the operations of Avalon Airport and rural activities.
- Ensure land use activities within the Farming Zone retain an agricultural focus and preserve the rural, environmental and landscape qualities of the area.
- Encourage the establishment of agricultural enterprises (including horticulture, aquaculture and intensive animal farming) with consideration to preserving landscape values.
- Support the establishment of farm based tourism activities that retain an agricultural focus and preserve the rural, environmental and landscape qualities of the land.

Map 4 – The Structure Plan



## PART B IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

The Implementation and Review Section identifies Review provisions and key Planning Scheme alterations, or supporting strategic work, necessary to attain the principles and directions identified in the Structure Plan including:

- Introduction of Planning Policy;
- Application of Zones and Overlays;
- Further strategic work required to support additional planning controls;
- Other Actions critical to attaining key principles directions.

### 1.0 Implementation of the Structure Plan

<b>Implementation Plan</b>	
<b>Using policy and the exercise of discretion</b>	Apply a Planning Policy reflecting the directions and principles of Part A of the Lara Structure Plan, incorporating the Structure Plan as a reference document.
<b>Applying Zones and Overlays</b>	<p>Apply a Business 1 zone to the town centre expansion area as set out in the UDF.</p> <p>Apply a Residential zone with either an IPO or DPO based on the principles identified in the Structure Plan to the Canterbury Road East, Caddys Road and Ponds Avenue residential development areas.</p> <p>Prepare an amendment to include designated food mapping into the Planning Scheme.</p> <p>Prepare an amendment to include a Public Park and Recreation zone to the Lara Recreation Reserve.</p>
<b>Undertaking further strategic work</b>	<p>Implement the Urban Design Framework for the Lara town centre.</p> <p>Investigate an Airport Environs Overlay on and around Avalon Airport.</p> <p>Further investigate the internodal transport facility at the preferred Lara location.</p> <p>Work with Avalon Airport management to develop a Master Plan for the site.</p> <p>Investigate the further work required to pursue an amendment to include the 59 heritage places in the schedule to the Heritage Overlay.</p>
<b>Other Actions</b>	<p>Implement pedestrian-cycle improvements as identified in the Structure Plan.</p> <p>Implement the traffic and road safety improvements in the Lara Transport Management Plan.</p> <p>Implement the findings of the Limeburners Bay Management Plan.</p> <p>Support the development of a Master Plan to outline the future use and development of the former quarry in Kees Road.</p> <p>Support the implementation of recommendations set out in the Lara Recreation Facilities Study (2008).</p> <p>Support the implementation of recommendations set out in the Lara Community Infrastructure Analysis (2008).</p> <p>Engage with Department of Transport to develop the Lara Train Station as a transport interchange including increased services.</p>

	<p>Apply Water Sensitive Urban design principles to new subdivision proposals and applications.</p> <p>Negotiate appropriate open space and developer contributions as part of rezoning and subdivision proposals.</p>
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## **2.0 Review of Structure Plan**

As this Plan sets a Settlement Boundary it is not intended that any short term review would examine further areas for urban development. However, it must be acknowledged that the ten year review would need to examine the Settlement Boundary in the context of the State and Local policies which exist at the time.

Given the issues and timing surrounding the implementation of the Lara town centre UDF, a 3 year review may be appropriate to monitor progress and revisit the framework or aspects of the framework to ensure the delivery of necessary retail facilities currently proposed by the Lara town centre UDF.



# **PART C BACKGROUND REPORT**

## **1.0 Introduction**

### ***1.1 Background***

Prior to the Lara Structure Plan 2007 the planning for the Lara township was contained within the Lara Structure Plan (1985) adopted by both the former Geelong Regional Commission and the former Shire of Corio in 1985.

The preparation of the 2007 Structure Plan commenced in the early 2000 and was adopted in 2007. Given the long gestation period the independent Panel appointed by the Minister for Planning recommended a review of the Structure Plan take place in 2007/2008 to revisit areas nominated for more intensive residential development. This Structure Plan review is limited in scope and includes an update of policies and strategies, statistical data and the Panel recommendations listed for review in 2007/2008 including confirmation of residential development opportunities.

Lara is a designated growth area under the Urban Growth Strategy (1996) and is the only such growth area in the northern part of the municipality. However, Lara is subject to a range of physical constraints, both natural and artificial, which limit the opportunities and directions for growth.

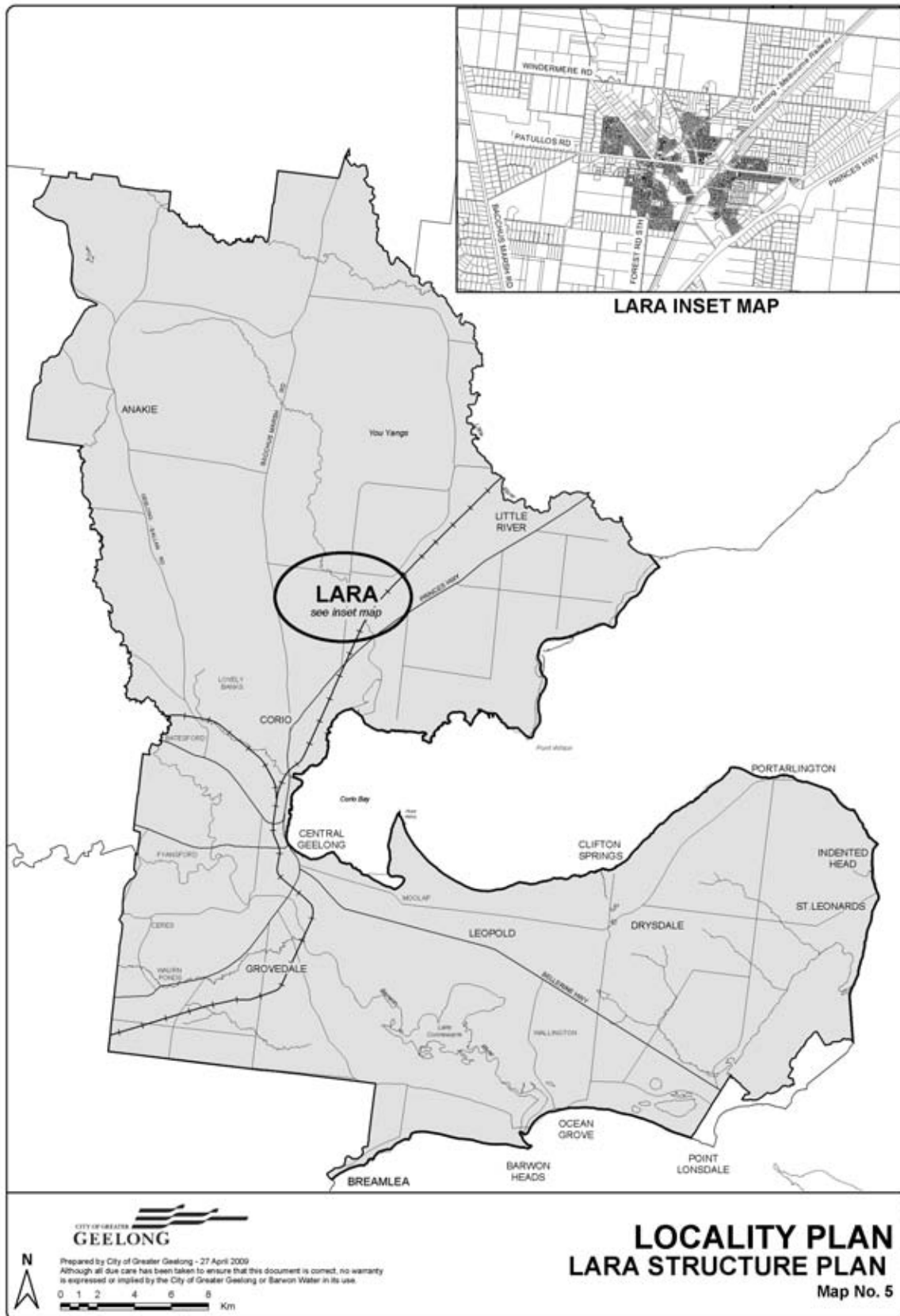
The purpose of this Structure Plan is to identify the key strategic issues and opportunities facing the township and articulate the preferred future directions including the location of a settlement boundary, future residential and commercial growth and future community service provision, as well as identifying appropriate planning controls.

### ***1.2 Location***

Lara is the major township in the northeastern area of the municipality approximately 15 kilometres north of the Geelong Central Activities Area, just west of the Princes Freeway. It has convenient access to both Melbourne and Geelong given its proximity to the major transport corridors between these two cities.

Map 5 shows the location of Lara relative to the City of Greater Geelong.

**Map 5 – Locality Map**



### **1.3 Indigenous Heritage**

Aborigines of the Wathaurong tribe, whose territory stretched between the Werribee River and the Otway Ranges, occupied the land before European settlement. The name 'Lara' is thought to mean 'stone' or 'building of stones' in the local Aboriginal dialect.

The You Yangs are one of Lara's natural attractions. The local Wathaurong clan's term for the hills - 'Yowang' - comes from words which meant 'forward movement' and 'the flight of a flung weapon'. The explorers Hume and Hovell arrived at Lara on 16 December, 1824, and recorded the words 'Jillong' for bay and 'Corago' for land, from the language of local Aborigines.

The Lara region has been the subject of previous Aboriginal heritage assessments which have focused on proposed infrastructure on or adjacent to the Princes Freeway (e.g. Lane 1997; Lane and Brown 1996; du Cros and Associates 1993; Newby and Muir 1999; Webb 1997a, b, c; Rhodes, Marshall and Webb 1999) and along old Melbourne Road (Marshall and Webb 2000). Smaller local studies have occurred closer to the township (Biosis Research 1998; Weaver 1998; Marshall 1998, 2001; Schell 2003, 2003a).

Collectively these studies have demonstrated the archaeological sensitivity of Hovell's Creek and its tributaries and the stony rises. Of the local landform, the You Yangs have been shown to be particularly significant with over 100 registered heritage places including sequences which date to the late Pleistocene period i.e. older than 10,000 years BP. The Lovely Banks monocline which is a raised volcanic plain is also known to contain extensive stone artefact scatters, some in remarkably high densities. Away from these landforms, low density stone artefact scatters dominate the local record. Due to the impact of agriculture including the removal of native vegetation and surface rock, these archaeological sites are typically described as being in disturbed contexts.

Aboriginal Affairs Victoria has identified areas of cultural heritage sensitivity within the Lara region, such as Hovell's Creek (AAV, 7721 Geelong - 1:100 000 Map Sheet) and forty within the study area.

#### **1.3.1 Aboriginal Planning Development Protocol**

Council has entered into a formal arrangement through a protocol with Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative to assist the community to help identify, conserve and protect places of Aboriginal cultural value from development that may impact on sites. This protocol provides the basis for the management, protection and enhancement of culturally significant Aboriginal sites.

Protection of Aboriginal sites is set out in the State *Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act* 1972 and the Commonwealth *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act* 1984.

The protocol sets out a number of trigger points where Council is required to take into account the requirements of Commonwealth and State legislation and the views of the Community in providing for the conservation and enhancement of places, sites and objects of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

A number of sites have previously been recorded by Wathaurong and Aboriginal Affairs Victoria in the Lara district including near waterways and therefore the requirements of the Protocol must be addressed in new areas of development. Cultural heritage sites may include Aboriginal flaked stone tools, Aboriginal surface scatters, stone arrangements, Aboriginal burials etc.

#### **1.3.2 Cultural Heritage Management Plans**

The regulations of the new Aboriginal Heritage Act specify the circumstances in which a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) is required for an activity or class of activity, which is specified as 'high impact' in areas of Aboriginal cultural sensitivity and also prescribes standards for the preparation of such plans. Advice from the Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) will be essential to ascertain when and if a CHMP is required for different activities and for different areas. According to the Municipal Association of Victoria 'in essence, if an activity is both in an area of cultural heritage sensitivity and is a high impact activity on land not previously significantly disturbed, it will require a CHMP before any planning permit can be determined'.

Cultural Heritage Sensitive Areas under the regulations include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Registered cultural heritage place or land within 50 metres of a registered place;
- Waterways (& within 200m) unless subject to significant ground disturbance;
- Prior waterways (& within 200m);
- Ancient lakes (& within 200m);
- Coastal Crown land;
- Coastal land within 200m of high water mark unless subject to significant ground disturbance;
- Parks;
- Greenstone outcrops unless subject to significant ground disturbance;
- Volcanic cones of western Victoria unless subject to significant ground disturbance;
- Caves;
- Sand sheets unless subject to significant ground disturbance.

#### **1.4 Post-Contact History**

The City of Greater Geelong Outer Areas Heritage Study Stage 2 Volume 2 1998-2000 has documented the following history of the Lara township, formerly known as Duck Ponds:

##### *“4. Lara*

*Batesford was the result of one man’s subdivision. Lara was the result of three: in 1853 J.E. Bates offered Section 15 A of the parish of Moranghurk in lots varying from one to three acres as the village of Lara; immediately west of this James Austin advertised Cheddar Farms and Cheddar Township; on the east John Highett had created the township of Swindon, the streets of which were named for famous scientists and engineers. This flurry of subdivisional activity was prompted by the fact that the Geelong-Melbourne railway was to run through the area and both Bates’ and Highett’s plans show a railway station, though in different locations. Thus there were three names for the locality which was already known as Duck Ponds (from Duck Ponds Creek - today’s Hovells Creek). It was not until 1874 that the name Lara was officially proclaimed and the boundaries of the town laid down; but even then the post office was known as Hovell’s Creek and the station as Duck Ponds for some time.*

*The first buildings in Lara once again appears to have been hotels. The Robin Hood, described as being at Duck Ponds but situated in James Austin’s subdivision of Lanercost on the Melbourne Road, was opened by William Grass but closed after two years. Longer lasting was the You Yangs Hotel, built by William Bragg to take advantage of the opening of the Geelong-Melbourne railway in 1857. He catered for picnic parties and ran horse races on a course adjoining the hotel. In 1872 the Lakebank Hotel (Figure 10) was opened and continued in business until 1908; the building still stands today, the only survivor of Lara’s nineteenth century hotels.*

*By 1882 Lara had a state school, three churches and a population of about 200. The first church was built by the Primitive Methodists in 1854 in Forest Road north of Hovells Creek. When the centre of population moved further south down Forest Road, a new church was erected in 1868; it still stands next to the Lara Lake school but is no longer in use as a church. Although they had been active in the area from the 1850s (see below), Anglicans did not build a church until 1877 when Holy Trinity was constructed. This building was destroyed in the 1969 bushfires but part of it has been retained as a memorial.*

*The first recorded school in Lara township was established at Lara Lake in 1864. Apparently it was already operating in a stone building 12 feet by 13 by 8 when a committee successfully obtained Government assistance. A school to hold forty pupils was erected immediately and a residence for the teacher followed in 1871. In 1873 brick additions allowed the school to accommodate 120. The school too was destroyed in the 1969 bushfires. While first in the town, the school was not the first in the district. This honour goes to the school established in 1855 at the You Yangs by the Anglicans; it was variously known as Station Peak, Duck Ponds and Flinders Peak (Figure 11). The bluestone schoolroom was 24 feet by 18 and there were two rooms for the teacher and a store; it doubled as a church on Sundays. When the Common School system was introduced in 1862, it became No. 188 Duck Ponds. After the 1872 Education Act the building was rented to the Education Department and still used for services on Sundays. Eventually the Department bought the building which became State School No. 2107. It closed in 1899, but opened again in 1907; however, its damp condition led*

to its final closure and the building of a new school in the vicinity - Flinders Peak School. Today the former school is used as an art gallery at the entrance to the You Yangs Reserve . There were other schools in the district. North-east of the You Yangs, in a building supplied by Monckton Synnot on his property Mowyong, a Church of England denominational school was established in 1857. In the following year it was moved to the base of the You Yangs and became known as Common School No. 760 Wurdilyouang. In 1878 it was moved again to a reserve in the State forest. It finally closed in 1915. On the Avalon estate a school was opened on land donated by Frank Austin in 1913 when the estate was opened to closer settlement; it lasted until 1950. In 1925 a school was opened on the Elcho estate to cater for the children of ex-Indian army servicemen who were being trained on Elcho; it closed in 1929. Strangely enough, the last place to obtain a school was Lara itself. In 1938 there had been an unsuccessful push to move Lara Lake school to a more central site and it was 1965 before Lara School was opened.

Lara had one significant advantage over other settlements in that it became the headquarters for local government. In 1863, while still a road board, it was decided to build offices on two acres of land near the Duck Ponds station. This building (Figure 12), erected for just over £250, served the board and its successor, the shire, satisfactorily until 1926 when it was extended. In 1937 the shire moved its headquarters to Osborne House, North Geelong; the old building eventually became the headquarters of Lara RSL.

The presence of the shire headquarters lent a stability and solidity to Lara which evidenced itself in the growth of community organisations. In 1865 there was a You Yangs Lodge of Oddfellows; by 1873 the temperance society had built its own hall (today's Uniting Church) which also doubled as the Duck Ponds Free Library; in 1879 there was a Reform and Protection League; in 1873 the formation of the Duck Ponds Cricket Club showed that the days of life being a grim struggle for existence had passed; in 1880 some 17 acres were reserved for recreational purposes followed in 1885 by the reservation near the railway station of the 12 acres of Austin Park; tennis made its appearance in the early days of this century. A police presence did not occur until 1907, an indication of a law-abiding community. More churches appeared - Presbyterians in 1909 and Catholics in 1912.

Lara's progress was steady, if not spectacular. It retained its air of a quiet English village until the 1950s after which it experienced rapid expansion into a dormitory suburb for both Geelong and Melbourne."

#### **1.4.1 Heritage Protection**

It is State and Local planning policy to conserve and enhance places of cultural heritage significance. In particular, Clause 21.16 of Council's Municipal Strategic Statement outlines Council's key objectives for cultural heritage as:

- To conserve and enhance individual places and areas of post-contact cultural heritage significance.
- To promote sympathetic infill and redevelopment of buildings and sites within heritage areas.

Council's strategies to achieve these objectives (also outlined in Clause 21.16) are:

- Protect heritage areas identified as being of historical and cultural significance.
- Protect places of recognised State and local cultural heritage significance by ensuring that conservation and enhancement contribute to their significance, and that development does not diminish it.
- Promote and facilitate development in heritage areas that incorporated building configurations and typology's that visually integrate the site with its surrounding environment.
- Ensure that redevelopment of heritage buildings and areas is visually compatible with existing forms, and generates a strong and positive contribution to the heritage area through innovative design.
- Promote new development that makes a positive contribution to the heritage area.

The protection of significant heritage places benefits the community by:

- Adding to the understanding of Geelong's rich cultural history.
- Recognising and realising the positive contribution that culturally significant places make to the municipality.
- Fostering a sense of personal, local and national identity - a feeling that this place is different from other places.
- Linking to the past and giving a *sense of place*, who we are - our cultural identity. Protecting our heritage helps to ensure that this identity and *sense of place* may be appreciated for present and future generations.
- Retaining existing urban infrastructure and resources; and
- Promoting sustainable development through conserving valuable resources and economising on materials and balancing this against the demands for development.

The inner areas of Geelong and the Bellarine Peninsula have been assessed and the identified heritage places incorporated into the Scheme. The Greater Geelong Outer Areas Heritage Study 2000 was commissioned to assess the heritage significance of the balance of the municipality, i.e. the outer areas comprising of the former Shire of Corio, a substantial proportion of the former City of South Barwon and small parts of the former Shires of Barrabool and Bannockburn. The results of the Study provided Council with a complete set of heritage studies for the whole municipality.

Relevant to Lara, the Outer Areas Heritage Study recommends that 59 culturally significant heritage places in Lara and Lara Lake, as shown in Table 1 be included in the Scheme for statutory protection from demolition and inappropriate development or alteration that could adversely affect their cultural significance. The implementation of this recommendation will achieve Council's cultural heritage objectives and the Structure Plan recommends that the required amendment to the Scheme be initiated.



Hume and Hovell Memorial, Princess Freeway

**TABLE 1 – SITES IN LARA PROPOSED FOR HERITAGE PROTECTION**

Address/Site	Site Name
60 Branch Road Lara	Ruins
30 Clover Street Lara	Former Dairy
29 Curletts Road Lara	Holy Trinity Church of England Tower & Lintel stops
36 Curletts Road Lara	House & Outbuilding
85 Curletts Road Lara	Cottage & Outbuilding
165 Duggans Lane Lara	Melrose Homestead
1 Flinders Avenue Lara	John Spalding Hall (Uniting Church)
1 Flinders Avenue Lara	Memorial
1 Flinders Avenue Lara	Former Wesleyan Chapel & Ugd Tank
76 Flinders Avenue Lara	Lara Baptist Church (fmr Catholic)
350 Flinders Avenue Lara	Cottage
450 Flinders Avenue Lara	The Pines
575 Flinders Avenue Lara	Cottage Ruins
175 Forest Road North Lara	Fmr Primitive Methodist Cemetery
570 Forest Road North Lara	House
3 Forest Road South Lara	House & Underground Tank
47 Forest Road South Lara	Former Blacksmith Shop
47 Forest Road South Lara	House
51 Forest Road South Lara	House
129 Forest Road South Lara	House (fmr Lake Bank Hotel)
155 Forest Road South Lara	Clover Hill Strawberry Farm
14 Hicks Street Lara	Lara General Store
25 Hicks Street Lara	Lara Railway Station
28 Hicks Street Lara	House
30 Hicks Street Lara	House & Dairy Outbuilding
31 McClelland Avenue Lara	House
8 Mill Road Lara	House
170 Peak School Road (south) Lara	Tallaranie Homestead
5 Rennie Street Lara	House
8 Rennie Street Lara	House
20 Rennie Street Lara	House
43 Station Lake Road Lara	House
87 Station Lake Road Lara	Austin Park
Walkers Road Lara	Avenue of Honour (Cypress Trees)
4 Walkers Road Lara	Lara & District War Memorial Gates
14 Walkers Road Lara	Waverley
9 Waverley Road Lara	Lara Comm. Centre (fmr Pres. Ch.)
10 Windemere Road Lara	Glenoe
Cnr Walker and Rennie Streets Lara	George and Annis Bills Trough
785 Bacchus Marsh Road Lara Lake	House
965 Bacchus Marsh Road Lara Lake	House
965 Bacchus Marsh Road Lara Lake	Dry Stone Fence
975 Bacchus Marsh Road Lara Lake	Lara Hill House & Outbuilding Ruins
25 Blairs Road Lara Lake	Ruins
35 Blairs Road Lara Lake	Building Ruins
115 Buckingham Street Lara Lake	Stables- Laurence Park
125 Buckingham Street Lara Lake	Cottage
120 Duggans Lane Lara Lake	House & Outbuilding Ruins
33 Gebbies Road Lara Lake	Cottage
80 Gebbies Road Lara Lake	Cottage complex
95 Hams Lane Lara Lake	House
24 Patullos Road Lara Lake	Cottage
32 Patullos Road Lara Lake	House
40 Patullos Road Lara Lake	House
295 Patullos Road Lara Lake	Lochnoben
75 Staceys Road Lara Lake	Kia Ora
450 Staceys Road Lara Lake	Roselea
10 Thomas Road Lara Lake*	Cottage

\* note dwelling demolished – heritage protection no longer required

## **2.0 Policy Context**

### **2.1 Key Strategies and Local Strategic Studies**

Lara is a part of the City of Greater Geelong municipality and is affected by various policies and strategies that have been formulated by the State Government and the Council. Of specific relevance are the Urban Growth Strategy the Transport Strategy, the Rural Residential Strategy, the Open Space Networks Study and the Retail Strategy. Each of these strategies has informed the discussion and policy development in this Structure Plan.

#### **2.1.1 Environment**

##### ***Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy 2003-2008 (Corangamite Catchment and Land Protection Board)***

The Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) for 2003-2008 provides long-term direction for managing the future of land, water resources, biodiversity and seascape of the Region, and the foundation for investment decisions to ensure improved natural resource outcomes. The Strategy identifies opportunities for improving natural resource management, new planning tools, monitoring and evaluation. Decision making by the planning authority must have regard to this strategy as required by the State and Local Planning Policy Framework of the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme.

##### ***City of Greater Geelong Environment Management Strategy (EMS) 2006-2011***

The aim of the EMS is to actively promote sustainability in all the actions and activities undertaken by the City. The EMS includes an Action Plan, which comprises an assessment of the issues affecting key themes including:

- Biodiversity Management;
- Sustainable Agriculture;
- Coastal & Marine;
- Waterways & Wetlands;
- Air Quality;
- Resource Use;
- Waste, Recycling and Reuse and;
- Urban Settlements.

The Strategy establishes the City's environmental and sustainability policy framework. The Geelong Sustainability Framework establishes the City's approach to sustainable development and sound environmental management.

##### ***City of Greater Geelong Biodiversity Strategy***

The Biodiversity Strategy was developed as an outcome of Council's 1999 Environmental Management Strategy that identified the conservation and protection of biodiversity as a priority for Council. The vision of the Biodiversity Strategy is *"A natural environment that is rich in biodiversity and is managed and maintained to protect, both now and in the future, the ecological systems upon which life depends."* The Strategy acknowledges that biodiversity is to play an important role, where the right of future generations to healthy, complete and vibrant biodiversity is entrenched, and to be a City that actively protects its biological wealth and prioritises long term responsibility over short term gains.

A set of guiding principles, targets of biodiversity and action plans are included in the Strategy.



### ***City of Greater Geelong Stormwater Management Plan 2002***

The Stormwater Management Plan has been developed to guide Council in improving the environmental management of stormwater. It proposes a framework for integrating stormwater management into Council's planning and management activities.

More particularly related to Lara, the Strategy identifies that land and infrastructure development as a result of urbanisation is a stormwater threat, especially to Hovells Creek, in the Lara sub-catchment. The clearance and disturbance of soils impacts on the nature of stormwater run-off, generally manifesting in modifications to the natural flow regime and the creation of a multitude of pollutant sources.

Management techniques recommended by the Strategy to minimise the impacts of stormwater pollution and to protect the values of the receiving environment include new planning guidelines, updated engineering specifications and environmental management plans that need to be developed by Council and implemented when planning for new urban areas.

### ***Hovells Creek, Lara: Flooding, 1998***

Hovells Creek starts near Mt Anakie and flows south east passing through Lara and out to Limeburners Bay into Corio Bay. The land around Hovells Creek is flood prone and there is potential for damage. Any land use development must be compatible with the flood prone nature of the area.

### ***Draft Limeburners Bay Management Plan (Stage 1), 2008***

This draft plan is a review of the original Limeburners Bay Management Plan 2001. Limeburners Bay is a complex site with significant environmental and conservation importance, including listing within the 1982 Ramsar Convention. Given the complexity of the site the City has undertaken the review of the 2001 Management Plan in distinct stages.

Stage 1 includes a review of the designated recreational use zones to assess if the aims, objectives and management guidance provided for these areas remain relevant and provides appropriate planning direction for Council to manage contemporary recreational uses of this area.

Subsequent stages will include a review of the biodiversity and conservation management of the site. Results from each stage will then be combined to form a new Management Plan for Limeburners Bay.

## ***2.1.2 Urban Growth and Land Use Planning***

### ***Melbourne 2030***

Melbourne 2030 is the State Government's planning strategy for metropolitan Melbourne and its surrounding regions for the next thirty years. One of the core directions of the strategy is to develop Metropolitan Melbourne and the surrounding regional cities as a network of cities. This objective is to be achieved through the implementation of the following strategies:

- Planning and supporting regional centres such as Geelong as viable alternative urban locations to Metropolitan Melbourne.
- Ensuring that infrastructure services are in place so that centres such as Geelong are able to take advantage of opportunities for growth.
- Encouraging planning for regional areas and cities that:
  - Delivers an adequate supply of land for housing and industry to meet forecast growth.
  - Limits the impact of urban development on non-urban areas and supports development in those areas that can accommodate growth.
  - Protects conservation and heritage values and the surrounding natural resource base.
  - Develops and reinforces the distinctive roles and character of each city.
- To control development in rural areas to protect agriculture and avoid inappropriate rural residential development by reducing new housing development provided in rural areas and encouraging the consolidation in existing settlements.

- Ensuring planning for rural living avoids or significantly reduces adverse economic, social and environmental impacts by:
  - Maintaining the long-term sustainable use and management of existing natural resource attributes in activities such as agricultural production.
  - Protecting existing landscape values and environmental qualities such as water quality, native vegetation, biodiversity and habitat.

### **Melbourne @ 5 Million**

*Melbourne @ 5 million* provides policy initiatives that are complementary to the directions of *Melbourne 2030* and the two documents should be considered together. *Melbourne @ 5 million* is an important refinement to some of the key directions of *Melbourne 2030*. The policy covers transport planning, developing multiple major activity centres, identifying employment corridors, identifying how to accommodate growth in established, growth and investigation areas and infrastructure provision.

### **Lara Structure Plan 2007**

The current Lara Structure Plan was adopted in August 2007. Major strategic directions within the plan were:

- Create a buffer to the Heales Road Industrial Area
- Consolidate the town centre
- Identify areas appropriate for future residential growth which included Canterbury Road East, Canterbury Road West, Darkes Road and Pautullos Road to Bacchus Marsh Road.

### **City, Coast, Country: City of Greater Geelong Urban Growth Strategy 1996**

Council's Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS), contained in the Planning Scheme, identifies Lara as an urban growth location for the City. Its location between Geelong and Melbourne, and good accessibility to road and rail transport infrastructure, underlie the high demand for residential opportunities in Lara. The following paragraph is extracted from the MSS and succinctly describes the urban growth situation in Lara:

*"To cater for high levels of demand in Lara, existing rural living zonings closest to the township centre are to be investigated for reconsolidation for conventional residential development. Lara is however subject to a range of physical constraints, both natural and man-made, which limit the opportunities and directions for growth. With its proximity to both Melbourne and Geelong, Lara has a key role in Council's overall strategy. A new Structure Plan is required to investigate the opportunities in detail and establish the future growth directions."*

### **City of Greater Geelong Rural Land Use Strategy 2007**

The purpose of the Rural Land Use Strategy is to establish a new policy regime for appropriately regulating rural land use and development in the context of changing agricultural practices and continued rural land development pressures. It identifies key directions in relation to the application of the State Government's new Rural Zones and planning policies for the rural areas, including policies for animal keeping and training, dwellings and subdivisions, and tourism development in rural areas. Lara is identified as providing Rural Living opportunities and as containing high quality agricultural land.

A number of key issues and findings are identified in the Strategy, including:

- Rural land has values and opportunities over and above agricultural values.
- Importance of protecting opportunities for agricultural activities that can contribute to the regional economy.
- Recognising the value of the rural areas and the farming landscape to the liveability of Geelong, wellbeing of the community and the ability to attract tourists and visitors.

### **Rural Residential Strategy 1994**

Since 1983 rural residential development has been guided by a comprehensive and effective set of planning policies that concentrate development at selected locations related to the availability of basic services and community infrastructure; to avoid environmentally sensitive or physically unsuitable land; to ensure areas of urban growth potential were not jeopardised; and to apply relevant zoning as the statutory control mechanism. The means of achieving this has been through directing rural residential development to a series of nodes across the region.

Lara is the largest Rural Residential Node in the region and extends outward more than 4kms from its centre. Located near the urban fringe of Geelong, it is tending to merge with urban development such as Heales Road Industrial Area and Avalon Airfield, and other rural residential development in North Corio and Lovely Banks.

### ***City of Greater Geelong Housing Diversity Strategy 2007***

The Housing Diversity Strategy recommends that the residential areas of Lara which are within 400 metres of the town centre and train station be subject to Increased Housing Diversity. It recommends that areas identified for Increased Housing Diversity should:

- Locate within 400 metres of one or more of the following:
  - Neighbourhood shopping centre;
  - Community facilities, including schools, community centres;
  - Active open space, including active walking trails (but not areas of environmental sensitivity);
  - Public transport stops.
- Acknowledge that residential character in these areas will adapt and evolve over time, particularly close to the centre of business areas;
- Ensure that greater consideration is given to the existing and preferred residential character (as defined by the Greater Geelong Residential Character Study – Precinct Brochures - 2001) at the edges of Increased Housing Diversity Areas, where the existing and preferred character of adjoining incremental change areas will dominate;
- Promote greater use of walking and non private vehicle transport through design of new development that supports safe and accessible pedestrian environments to and through activity centres and Increased Housing Diversity Areas.

Outside the increased housing diversity areas the strategy recommends the Residential 3 zone be applied to allow incremental housing diversity which:

- Enables the evolution of Incremental Change Areas to include the incremental use and development of medium density housing, whilst respecting the preferred neighbourhood character as defined by the Greater Geelong Residential Character Guidelines – 2001.
- Prefers medium density sites where a greater number of facilities or services are provided in proximity to the subject site.

## ***2.1.4 Community Development***

### ***Geelong Strategic Health Plan 2006-2009***

The Geelong Strategic Health Plan is designed to enhance the health status of the people serviced by the City of Greater Geelong by encouraging cooperative arrangements between local agencies, service providers and the community in achievement of public health objectives. The plan identifies a number of goals and objectives in relation to various health priorities.

### ***Lara Community Infrastructure Analysis, 2008***

This study provides an infrastructure analysis for Lara to assist with planning for the needs of Lara's growing population. The key issues that need to be addressed in Lara include:

- The distribution, provision and delivery of medical and health facilities to meet all target groups;
- Early childhood services and support for young families;
- Permanent library and
- Consideration of high needs groups

The analysis looks at the existing facilities and services in Lara and using service provision benchmarks and population growth forecasts looks at the future needs of the community. Based on this data community infrastructure needs have been identified for the years 2012 and 2030. The infrastructure covered includes education, health and community services.

### ***Geelong Community Health Strategy 2007-2010***

This strategy identifies a number of key community safety issues and sets out various objectives, strategies and performance measures to address these issues.

## ***2.1.5 Infrastructure and Economics***

### ***Geelong Transport Strategy December 2003***

The Geelong Transport Strategy 2002 has been prepared to provide a clear direction on developing and managing existing and emerging transport issues in the city over the next decade. In its focus on freight the Strategy recognised the need to investigate traffic issues in the Lara area. In particular, the number of heavy vehicles using inappropriate roads (including residential streets) for access between the Heales Road Industrial Estate and the Princes Highway and from the quarries to the north of the township.

The Strategy consequently recommended that an investigation be undertaken to resolve heavy vehicle movement and road improvement issues in the area to address amenity concerns and cater for increased travel demand. This further investigation has been made through the Lara Transport Management Plan.

### ***Lara Transport Management Plan 2002***

The 2002 Draft Transport Strategy provides a detailed overview of current traffic issues in Lara and the actions needed to be employed to reduce or negate these issues both now and in the future. Due to the predicted population growth in Lara the traffic management plan plays an important role addressing issues associated with development.

The purpose of the study is to:

- Determine existing issues relating to the transportation of people and product
- Determine the impacts of future residential and industrial development on the transport system, and
- Identify improvement options and preferred solutions for the subject study area to enable Council to cost effectively manage the safe and orderly movement of people and product and reduce adverse impacts of travel on the community.

The Lara Transport Management Plan recommends a more detailed investigation to be undertaken to investigate the following:

- Resolve heavy vehicle movement issues
- Address road improvement issues
- Address amenity concerns
- Cater for increased travel demand.

### ***G21 Integrated Public Transport Strategy***

This report identifies strategies and short and long-term actions that provide direction for the future of public transport within the G21 Region. The Strategy considers the range of public transport options available to the G21 community and presents a staged plan for the improvement of the public transport system to better service the needs of residents and visitors. A number of short term options for the upgrade to services have been identified for Lara including expanding routes to include growth areas and providing more peak time services.

### ***Transit Cities***

The Transit Cities initiative places a strong emphasis on public transport planning and a commitment to help improve the State's social, environmental and economic success through balanced and practical transport strategies. Transit Cities is a program for creating safe, vibrant and accessible communities, centred on public transport.

### ***Travelsmart***

TravelSMART is a Victorian Government initiative that aims to reduce car use (vehicle kilometres travelled) and encourage the use of alternatives including walking, cycling and public transport. The TravelSMART program comprises community, workplace and school streams. This plan provides an opportunity for Council to commit to TravelSMART.

The TravelSMART initiative looks to encourage people to use their cars less and walk, cycle and take public transport more. While the main focus of the program is the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, there are many other benefits to peoples quality of life, including increased exercise, less congestion and a better use of existing resources.

### ***Geelong Economic Development Strategy 2005-2010***

The Geelong Economic Development Strategy provides a framework for Council activities in economic development by identifying priority actions for the next five years. The Strategy encourages the pursuit of activities that will maximise the Region's competitive advantages, encourage investment and secure employment opportunities for the future. A number of Strategic Growth Sectors are identified in the Strategy, with prioritised actions and objectives for each Sector.

### ***Heales Road Industrial Estate Framework Plan 2007***

The framework provides a context for the Estate's future development by providing a supply/demand assessment. It also provides an assessment of the key development opportunities and constraints for the Estate and presents a framework with a set of key recommendations to progress the project to the amendment stage.

### ***Geelong Intermodal Freight Terminal Feasibility Study: Final Report, 2007***

This study was prepared for the Victorian Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development Victoria and City of Greater Geelong and looks at the potential to develop an intermodal terminal in the Geelong region. Five sites were investigated with the most favourable site being a privately owned piece of land north of the Lara township. The study identifies further work required before going forward on the project including a detailed cost-benefit assessment. The study also identifies the demand for an intermodal terminal and what operations the facility might carry out.

### ***Draft Lara Intermodal Industrial Estate Economic Impact Assessment – Study Report, 2008***

This study prepared by Urbis looks at the current industrial land supply in the Geelong region, the current demand and take-up and an assessment of the Lara site and alternate sites in relation to providing an intermodal facility. In summary the report concluded the site was an attractive option given the proximity to road, rail and transport services and a high quality facility could generate more demand for industrial land and increase land values across the region.

### ***Lara Intermodal Terminal Development Master Plan - Opportunities and Constraints, 2009***

This Master Plan is prepared by Urbis and Buildev and outlines the context and features of the site and the opportunities and constraints which include drainage, flora and fauna, Avalon Airport flight paths, surrounding transport network, visual considerations among others. A development opportunity plan has been developed as a result which includes 5 key areas which include the railway corridor, area most constrained due to drainage and environmental considerations, areas most available for development and areas requiring buffers for amenity reasons.

The Strategy promotes a viable and accessible retail sector network across the municipality by supporting an established retail hierarchy. This includes supporting the town centres of the townships across the municipality as the town centres have a specific role in the retail hierarchy of Geelong offering more choice in retail and non-retail functions and are the community hub for townships.

### ***Geelong Retail Strategy 2006***

The foundation of the Strategy is to support the established retail hierarchy within the municipality to provide for a viable and accessible retail sector having regard to population growth, socio-economic and demographic characteristics, retailing trends and growth in new residential areas.

The Strategy nominates Lara as a designated town centre with the role of day-to-day and weekly convenience shopping, and also including - where local demand is sufficient - a range of comparison and non-food retail. Currently, there is a proposal for a mini-DDS store (around 1,500m<sup>2</sup> to 2,000m<sup>2</sup>) at Lara which would consolidate the current town centre role.

## ***2.1.6 Open Space and Recreation***

### ***City of Greater Geelong Study of Open Space Networks 2001***

This Study completed a comprehensive assessment of City's existing open space assets and needs. It recommends that there be coordination, development and management of open space in and around the City and provides the framework for achieving this in the future. Key recommendations of the Study for Lara include reserving land in the growth corridor areas of Lara for future recreation; developing a linear linkage route along the full length of Hovells Creek; reserve land in future subdivisions for informal parks, landscape, recreation and amenity purposes; and developing linear linkage routes throughout Lara to link residential areas to major open spaces.

For the northern section of the municipality the Study documents that its character is derived from the natural landscape setting and these landscape features are crucial to the integrity of the region and should not be compromised. Accordingly, the Study adopts the policy that the green break between metropolitan Melbourne and Geelong should be reinforced through protection of rural areas of the northern zone from urban and rural residential development. This supports the Urban Growth Strategy and Rural Land Use Strategy, which also contain policies to protect the green break between Geelong and Melbourne.

### ***Strategic Footpaths Policy, City of Greater Geelong, 2007***

The City of Greater Geelong has developed a Strategic Footpaths Policy to provide direction to the provision of footpath infrastructure that promotes walkability, accessibility and that can be shared by a range of users in a safe manner. The Policy identifies an approach for identifying infrastructure gaps, funding, establish standards for new infrastructure (including standards for new subdivision development) and asset management.

### ***Lara Outdoor Recreation Facilities Study 2008***

This study identifies and assesses the outdoor sporting facility needs of the Lara community and outlines an appropriate long-term strategic direction to address the identified needs. Master plans have been developed to cover the short and long term options.

The key findings of the Study were:

- Cricket – require an additional oval in the short term (i.e. next five years), and may require another oval in the long-term (i.e. 15+ years) in order to cater for match day scheduling needs
- Australian Rules Football – require access to an additional senior sized oval.
- Baseball – there is no evidence of demand for access to a second diamond in the foreseeable future. Preference is given to the enhancement of existing facilities.
- Football (Soccer) – require access to a minimum of two permanent, dedicated soccer pitches, plus access to an additional two pitches which may be shared with other user groups (i.e. require access to 4 pitches in total). Provision of synthetic surfaces may reduce the overall requirement for pitches (i.e. total 3 pitches rather than 4).
- Tennis – there is no evidence of demand for additional courts.
- Netball – an additional two netball courts are likely to be required in the long-term.
- The Lara Primary School oval is suitable for upgrade/redevelopment and continued shared use with the community, particularly for junior sport.

- Lara Recreation Reserve should continue to be developed primarily for active sporting use and should be developed in the long term to consolidate cricket, football and baseball activities within the town and where possible incorporate opportunities for informal and passive activities.
- The recently acquired northern section of the Lara Recreation Reserve should be rezoned by Council to PPRZ, consistent with its primary role as an active recreation reserve.
- CoGG should consider the development of a municipal wide *Soccer Facility Strategy* as a high priority.
- Investigate options to ensure facilities (current and proposed) can function in the current drought and water restrictions.
- Investigate options for purchase of the Alkara Avenue site (private property) by negotiation with the existing owner. This site is ideally located for inclusion into the broader recreation reserve and could potentially be developed to incorporate a playground, community BBQ and landscaping.
- The Canterbury Road East site (within the Heales Road industrial estate buffer zone) has been identified as the preferred venue for the future development of dedicated soccer facilities to cater for the long-term needs of the community.

Three master plans have been developed which cover the Lara Recreation Reserve long and short term development options and the Canterbury Road East soccer facilities.

### **City of Greater Geelong Cycle Strategy 2008**

The City of Greater Geelong Cycle Strategy has been developed to provide Council with guidance on expanding Geelong's regional on and off road cycle network, improving bicycle facilities, enhancing cyclist education and delivering promotions that encourage people to cycle as a means of transport, recreation and sport.

## **2.2 Planning Scheme Provisions**

Many of the strategies and guidelines detailed above form part of the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme, and are included as reference documents to guide the exercise of discretion when considering applications for uses and/or development within the municipality.

The key State and Local Planning Policies, together with the zone/overlay provisions are summarised in the following tables:

***It should be noted that Clause 21 and Clause 22 are currently subject to amendment C129 (see below for details), however local principles and directions have generally been retained.***

### **State and Local Planning Polices**

<b>Clause</b>	<b>Key Objective and Provisions</b>	<b>Implications for the study area.</b>
12.03: Melbourne 2030 – Networks with regional centres.	Establishes broad policy directions relating to urban planning for regional centres including Geelong.	Limited – Provides general direction for planning of rural and urban areas, to ensure an adequate and appropriate supply of residential land that does not negatively impact on the established rural areas.
14.01: Settlement	Establishes general principles and objectives for urban settlement including provision of urban land supply and using Structure Plans for the orderly development of urban areas.	Development of the Structure Plan must be consistent with State Environment Protection policies, the strategic and physical context of the location, respond to neighbourhood character and encourage consolidation of existing urban areas, provide for liveable and sustainable communities and efficient provision of infrastructure.
15: Environment	Seeks to respect and respond to catchments and waterways,	Requires development of coastal areas to be consistent with the principles of the

	flooding, air and soil conditions, flora and fauna and coastal locations.	Victorian Coastal Strategy and Coastal Management Act and the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994.
16: Housing	Establishes objectives for subdivision and residential development including the application of Rescode via Clauses 54 - 56.	Any residential standards should not replicate Rescode provisions.
17: Economic Development	Development of rural living and rural residential areas restricted by application of Ministerial Direction No 6. Establishes a framework for the development of activity centres, protection of productive agricultural land and development of appropriate tourism opportunities.	Recommendations relating to future residential and rural residential development must be consistent with state policy. Any recommendations relating to the further development of the retail area must be consistent with the broader municipal/regional retail hierarchy. Provides opportunity to establish objectives and policy relating to improvements to town centres and development of tourism based facilities commensurate with the scale and role of the town.
18: Infrastructure	Establishes objectives for the provision of physical and community infrastructure.	Infrastructure provision must be efficient, sustainable and relate to key needs.
19.03 Design and built form	Establishes a framework for ensuring high quality urban design and architecture.	Urban design and architecture must reflect the characteristics, aspirations and cultural identity.
21.05: Planning Principles	Establishes a number of land use and development principles which underpin Council's strategic directions, arising from Council's vision and City Plan 2001.	Key implications for the study area include: directions to maintain a non-urban breaks between settlements, encourage urban consolidation with defined urban forms; population growth to be accommodated in existing zones and designated growth locations; protect environmental features including catchments and preserve landscape values; protect rural land; provide for efficient and sustainable infrastructure; provide for commercial and retail facilities appropriate to the needs of local populations; foster a sense of identity and community in built form and design.
21.08: Urban Growth	Establishes a reference to the 1996 Urban Growth Strategy and identifies key growth areas.	Lara is a designated growth area.



21.09: Rural Residential Development	Designates nodes for rural residential development and appropriate supply of rural living opportunities within the municipality.	Lara is a designated area for rural residential development. Careful consideration is to be given to any expansion of the designated nodes in order to overcome problems of over-extension, conflict with other uses and to ensure sound land management consistent with ecologically sustainable development principles.
21.10: Environmental Management	Establishes principles for effective management of the environment to assist in its protection.	Provides a commitment to develop townships and the City as a whole in accordance with Environmental Sustainable Development principles.
21.11: Protection of Catchments, Waterways and Groundwater	Establishes a number of principles relating to land and waterway management to ensure adequate protection.	Requires development and planning assessments to take into consideration impacts of uses and development on catchments and waterways.
21.12: Flood Management	Establishes principles for the effective management of flood issues, including the protection of life and property.	Recognise the impacts of flooding and consider the application of appropriate planning zones and overlays to protect life and property and the environment.
21.13: Coastal Areas	Builds upon the State policy relating to the Environment and establishes broad principles relating to urban development and forms on the coast.	Aims to improve water quality in Corio Bay by improving land management practices in the vicinity of the coast.
21.14: Conservation of Native Flora and Fauna	Establishes principles for effective protection of flora and fauna.	Encourages revegetation of land within townships, both on private and public land. Requires new development to minimise vegetation removal.
21.15: Open Space	Establishes directions for the efficient and effective provision of open space areas.	Promotes a linked open space network, which meets the community's needs, preserves the key landscape attributes of the municipality and enhances the amenity of the municipality.
21.16: Cultural Heritage	Seeks the retention and protection of places of identified heritage and cultural significance.	Promotes conservation and enhancement of identified places which does not undermine their significance but contributes to it.
21.17: Energy Efficiency	Establishes principles for energy conservation.	Promotes dwelling and subdivision design that incorporates energy efficient design principles, encourages efficient infrastructure use and urban form.
21.18: Housing	Builds upon State Planning policy relating to Housing	Promotes the protection and improvement of the urban character of townships and the provision of housing stock which caters for the range of housing needs in the community. Includes reference to the Residential Character Study.

21.19: Economic Development	Builds upon the State Planning Policy relating to Economic Development.	Promotes a diverse range of economic opportunities.
21.20: Commercial and Retail Centres	Establishes a range of principles which support the existing retail hierarchy	Encourages retail proposals which embody the concept of net community benefit and population influences. Promotes high standards and urban design in retail centres.
21.22: Industry	Establishes directions to build on the existing industrial base and which consolidates and promotes existing industry.	Does not include designation of outlying townships for industrial uses and expansion.
21.23: Tourism	Establishes principles relating to Geelong's tourism opportunities.	Promote tourism opportunities which build on existing assets and protects sensitive environments, such as the coast and beaches. Promotes tourism features which integrate with other activity centres and facilities, through urban design and linkages.
21.24: Agriculture and Rural Land	Establishes principles to retain Geelong's agricultural and environmental resource base	Directs urban growth and rural residential growth to specific locations to protect the municipality's agricultural resource base.
21.26: Integrated Transport	Establishes directions relating to provision of a range of transport modes.	Promotes a linked, efficient transport system which is sustainable and meets the community's needs.
21.30: Design and Built Form	Builds upon State Planning Policy relating to Design and Built Form and further promotes urban design and architecture which reflects the community characteristics, aspirations and cultural identity.	Provides opportunity to develop siting and design guidelines for a variety of land use types. Encourages incorporation of urban design principles and actions in the review of Township Structure Plans.
21.31: Lara	This local planning policy is specific to Lara and seeks to guide the expanding regional role of town and ensure the optimum use of resources within the townships.	Articulates location of a growth boundary, future residential and commercial growth and future community service provision in the township.

**Amendment C129 - Municipal Strategic Statement Review**

Council has adopted a new Municipal Strategic Statement and Local Planning Policies. This amendment is known as C129 and is awaiting Ministerial approval. The policies most relevant to Lara are as follows:

**Municipal Strategic Statement**

Natural Environment (Clause 21.05)

- Water
- Biodiversity
- Coastal Environments
- Climate Change
- Natural Resource Management
- Flooding

Settlement and Housing (Clause 21.06)

- Urban Growth
- Urban Consolidation
- Neighbourhood Character
- Heritage and Identity

Economic Development and Employment (Clause 21.07)

- Industry
- Retail
- Economic Growth Sectors
- North, West and Southern Rural Areas
- Avalon Rural Areas
- Tourism in Rural Areas

Development and Community Infrastructure (Clause 21.08)

- Transport
- Development Contributions
- Open Space
- Accessibility

Lara (Clause 21.12)

**Local Planning Policy Framework**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 22.01 Discretionary Uses in Residential Areas                              | 22.03 Assessment Criteria for Retail Planning Applications |
| 22.04 Discretionary Uses in Rural Living and Low Density Residential Areas | 22.05 Agriculture, Rural Dwellings and Subdivision         |
| 22.06 Tourism Development in Rural Areas                                   | 22.07 Racing Dog Keeping and Training                      |
| 22.09 Cultural Heritage  |  |

<b>ZONES</b>	
Residential 1 Zone (R1Z)	The majority of the residential land in Lara is zoned R1Z. The purpose of this zone is to provide for residential development at a range of densities with a variety of dwellings.
Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ)	Lara has pockets of Low Density Residential areas. The purpose of the zone is to provide for low-density residential development on lots which, in the absence of reticulated sewerage, can treat and retain all wastewater.
Rural Living Zone (RLZ)	Lara has extensive areas of land rural living land, this most occurs on the fringes of the residential zone. The purpose of the Rural Living Zone is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide for residential use in a rural environment.</li> <li>• To provide for agricultural land uses which do not adversely affect the amenity of surrounding land uses.</li> <li>• To protect and enhance the natural resources, biodiversity and landscape and heritage values of the area.</li> <li>• To encourage use and development of land based on comprehensive and sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision.</li> </ul>

Farming Zone (FZ)	The majority of the land beyond the residential township is zoned FZ. The purpose of this zone is to provide for the sustainable use of land for extensive animal husbandry and crop raising.
Business 1 Zone (B1Z)	The majority of the town centre is zoned B1Z as is the small shopping strip on Patullos Road. The purpose of the zone is to encourage the intensive development for retailing and other complementary commercial, entertainment and community uses.
Business 4 Zone (B4Z)	A small strip between Hicks and Clover Streets is zoned Business 4. The purpose of the zone is to encourage the development of a mix of bulky goods retailing and manufacturing industry and their associated business services.
Industrial 1 Zone (IN1)	The southern end of the Heales Road Industrial Estate is zoned Industrial which aims to provide for manufacturing industry, the storage and distribution of goods and associated uses in a manner which does not affect the safety and amenity of local communities.
Industrial 2 Zone (IN2)	Heales Road is zoned IN2 the purpose of this zone is to provide for manufacturing industry, the storage and distribution of goods and associated facilities that require a substantial threshold distance in a manner which does not affect the safety and amenity of local communities.
Industrial 3 Zone (IN3)	A small pocket of IN3 on the corner of McClelland Ave and Old Melbourne Road. The purpose of this zone is to provide for industries and associated uses in specific areas where special consideration of the nature and impacts of industrial uses is required or to avoid inter-industry conflict and to ensure that uses do not affect the safety and amenity of adjacent, more sensitive land uses.
Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ)	The majority of public open space areas throughout the township are zoned PPRZ. The purpose of this zone is to recognise areas for public recreation and open space, protect and conserve areas of significance where appropriate and to provide for commercial uses where appropriate.
Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ)	Serendip Sanctuary and the Hovells Creek reserve are zoned Public Conservation and Resource. The purpose of this zone is to protect and conserve the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, scientific, landscape, habitat or cultural values, to provide facilities which assist in public education and interpretation of the natural environment with minimal degradation of the natural environment or natural processes and to provide for appropriate resource based uses.
Urban Floodway Zone (UFZ)	Areas around waterways, major floodpaths, drainage depressions and high hazard areas within urban areas which have the greatest risk and frequency of being affected by flooding are zoned UFZ. The purpose is to ensure any development maintains the free passage and temporary storage of floodwater, minimises flood damage and is compatible with flood hazard, local drainage conditions and the minimisation of soil erosion, sedimentation and silting.
Floodway Overlay (FO)	The purpose of the FO is to identify waterways, major flood paths, drainage depressions and high hazard areas which have the greatest risk and frequency of being affected by flooding and to ensure that any development maintains the free passage and temporary storage of floodwater, minimises flood damage and is compatible with flood hazard, local drainage conditions and the minimisation of soil erosion, sedimentation and silting.
Special Use Zone (SU1, SU11)	The Cheetham Salt works and Avalon Airport is zoned SUZ. The purpose of the zone is to provide for the use and development of land for specific purposes. In this case salt production and land-based aquaculture and to provide for an operational airport and associated

Public Use Zone (PUZ1), (PUZ4) & (PUZ5)	<p>activities.</p> <p>The cemetery, Barwon Water assets and the Geelong-Melbourne Railway are all zoned Public Use. The purpose of which is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise public land use for public utility and community services and facilities.</li> <li>• Provide for associated uses that are consistent with the intent of the public land reservation or purpose.</li> </ul>
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<b>Overlays</b>	
Design and Development Overlay (DDO14) (DDO7) & (DDO18)	<p>This overlay sets out specific requirements relating to the design and built form of new development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DDO14 applies to most residential areas within the City of Greater Geelong and aims to ensure new dwellings and extensions are compatible with the existing scale and character of adjoining dwellings. This overlay will expire on 30 June 2009, however the current MSS amendment C129 proposes the permanent application of this overlay.</li> <li>• DDO7 aims to ensure that an effective buffer distance is maintained between dwellings on the south side of Minyip Road, Lara and the Heales Road Industrial Estate.</li> <li>• DDO18 aims to facilitate the development of the Heales Road Industrial Estate as a high amenity industrial area suited to the needs of advanced manufacturing and production support industries.</li> </ul>
Heritage Overlay (HO)	<p>There are four identified heritage places within the township:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HO279 – Pirra Homestead at 110 Windermere Road</li> <li>• HO280 – Former Corio Shire Hall at 2 Rennie Street</li> <li>• HO1731 - The Hume and Hovell monument adjacent to 106 Rennie Street</li> <li>• HO16 – Residence at 605 Bacchus Marsh Road</li> </ul>
Special Building Overlay (SBO)	<p>This overlay applies to the Grand Lakes Estate. The purpose of the overlay is to identify urban land liable to inundation and ensure development maintains the free passage and temporary storage of floodwaters, minimises flood damage, is compatible with the flood hazard and local drainage conditions and will not cause any significant rise in flood level or flow velocity.</p>
Development Plan Overlay (DPO7, DPO13)	<p>This overlay identifies areas which require the form and conditions of future use and development to be shown on a development plan before a permit can be granted to use or develop the land.</p> <p>DPO7 applies to the Low Density Residential Zoned land at, and adjoining the north east and north west corners of McHarrys Road and Buckingham Street, Lara. It is required to ensure adequate provision is made for the management of stormwater, treatment and disposal of wastewater and protection of any native grass lands.</p> <p>DPO13 applies to land generally bounded by Canterbury Road West, O'Hallorans Road, Buckingham Street, Barbara Drive. The development plan provides for the integrated and coordinated development including a high standard of urban and landscape design and servicing.</p>
Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO)	<p>The purpose of the overlay is to identify land in a flood storage or flood fringe area affected by the 1 in 100 year flood or any other area determined by the floodplain management authority and to ensure appropriate development.</p>

Public Acquisition Overlay – Schedule 3 (POA3)	This overlay applies to road reservations, Forest Road South, for the purpose of allowing VicRoads to create and construct a Road Zone – Category 1.
Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO2)	This overlay applies to high value wetlands and habitat protection along Hovells Creek. The primary objectives of the overlay are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To conserve and protect areas of flora and fauna habitat and geological and natural interest.</li> <li>• To ensure that development does not impact on the environmental significance of the land.</li> <li>• To ensure that siting and design of any buildings and works maintains the environmental integrity of the land.</li> </ul>

## 2.3 Key Influences

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lara is a designated growth area.</li> <li>▪ Need to nominate a clear Settlement Boundary for the township and provide a compact urban form.</li> <li>▪ Need to prevent urban development from encroaching onto land that is subject to flooding, drainage, aircraft noise constraints and industrial operations.</li> <li>▪ Lara has a major industrial precinct (Heales Road) to the south and Avalon Airport to the east of the township which require adequate buffers.</li> <li>▪ Need to enhance the town centre and reinforce The Centreway Shopping Centre as the primary activity centre.</li> <li>▪ Opportunities exist for enhancement and provision of additional open space, recreational facilities and linkages.</li> <li>▪ A need to provide community infrastructure, services and facilities commensurate with communities needs.</li> <li>▪ A need to provide safe, sustainable and integrated transport and movement networks.</li> <li>▪ Strong State and Local Planning Policies provide directions for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- animal keeping/training/racing</li> <li>- protection of the rural environment and agricultural activities.</li> <li>- enhancement of design and built form of the township.</li> <li>- tourism in rural areas</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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## **3.0 Natural and Urban Environment**

Lara has a diverse range of natural and urban environments. The development of Lara is constrained by a number of factors including flooding and drainage issues, buffers from Avalon Airport and industrial areas and the need to protect environmentally sensitive areas and productive agricultural land.

### **3.1 Natural Environment**

#### ***3.1.1 Key Environmental Features***

Lara and its environs has a range of environmental sites including grassy woodlands, western basalt plains grasslands and riparian vegetation along Hovells Creek including old-growth Red Gums. An objective of this Structure Plan is to protect areas of environmental significance in and around Lara and it is imperative that future development in the township respect these assets. Map 6 below shows the significant landscape features and biodiversity sites of Lara.

##### *You Yangs and Brisbane Ranges*



View of the You Yangs

Lara is located within the relatively flat landscape of the basalt plains in the northern part of the municipality. The You Yangs and the Brisbane Ranges are natural outcrops and significant landscape features in the distance. This natural landscape is overlaid with indigenous and natural history, and provides biological and geological diversity. These landscape features are important to Lara and the wider region.

##### *Hovells Creek and Limeburners Bay*

Creeks and streams that have a history of flooding pass through the Lara township. Hovells Creek creates a wide flood plain that divides the town from northwest to southeast and causes the inundation of several established residential areas. Hovells Creek is a major landscape and topographical feature and is an environmentally important waterway that flows into Limeburners Bay where there is a significant and rare mangrove community.

Hovells Creek is itself a complex waterway that has been altered as a result of past flooding events and conveys much of the stormwater discharge from the Lara urban area. As a consequence the mangrove community to the south of the Princes Highway near Limeburners Lagoon which is a Ramsar listed wetland is under pressure from up-stream activities that have increased freshwater run-off and nutrient and sediment deposits. It is important to protect all tributaries of the Hovells Creek catchment.

Council's Environment Department are in the process of finalising the Limeburners Bay Management Plan. This will cover the management of public land downstream of the bridge at the Princes Highway and provide directions for the Ramsar area including the rare mangrove community within the lower reach of Hovells Creek.

Remnants of River Red Gums along Hovells Creek provide a significant landscape and habitat feature for the township. These are complemented by significant roadside and railway reserve vegetation and rare and endangered grassland communities in the outer parts of Lara and in the northern plains. Land use impacts from agriculture, industrialisation and urbanisation have reduced the pre-European biodiversity to a fraction of that which formerly existed.

##### *Serendip Sanctuary*

Serendip Sanctuary to the north of Windermere Road occupies a large area of approximately 227ha. It provides an example of open grassy woodlands and wetlands of the volcanic Western Plains. In 1987, the government decided to re-develop the property, previously used for farming, a retreat and research station

into a wetlands education centre, with the aim of bringing the wetlands and wildlife of the Western Plains to the people. It is an artificially created wetland system that is fed by surface rainwater.

Over 150 species of birds breed at or visit Serendip Sanctuary Serendip which also provides habitat for a variety of mammal species. Vegetation as Red Gums and wattles and a variety of grass and herb species are also found at the Sanctuary.

Serendip Sanctuary, opened to the public in 1991, is now managed by Parks Victoria and receives support from The Alcoa Landcare Project and Friends groups.



Bird hide at Serendip Sanctuary

### Grasslands

The Lara area contains patches of remnant grasslands which form part of the Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain which is being listed as a critically endangered ecological community under the Federal Governments Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act). It is a vegetation community that is in severe decline and now mostly comprises of small, highly fragmented remnants in landscapes cleared for agriculture and industrial development.

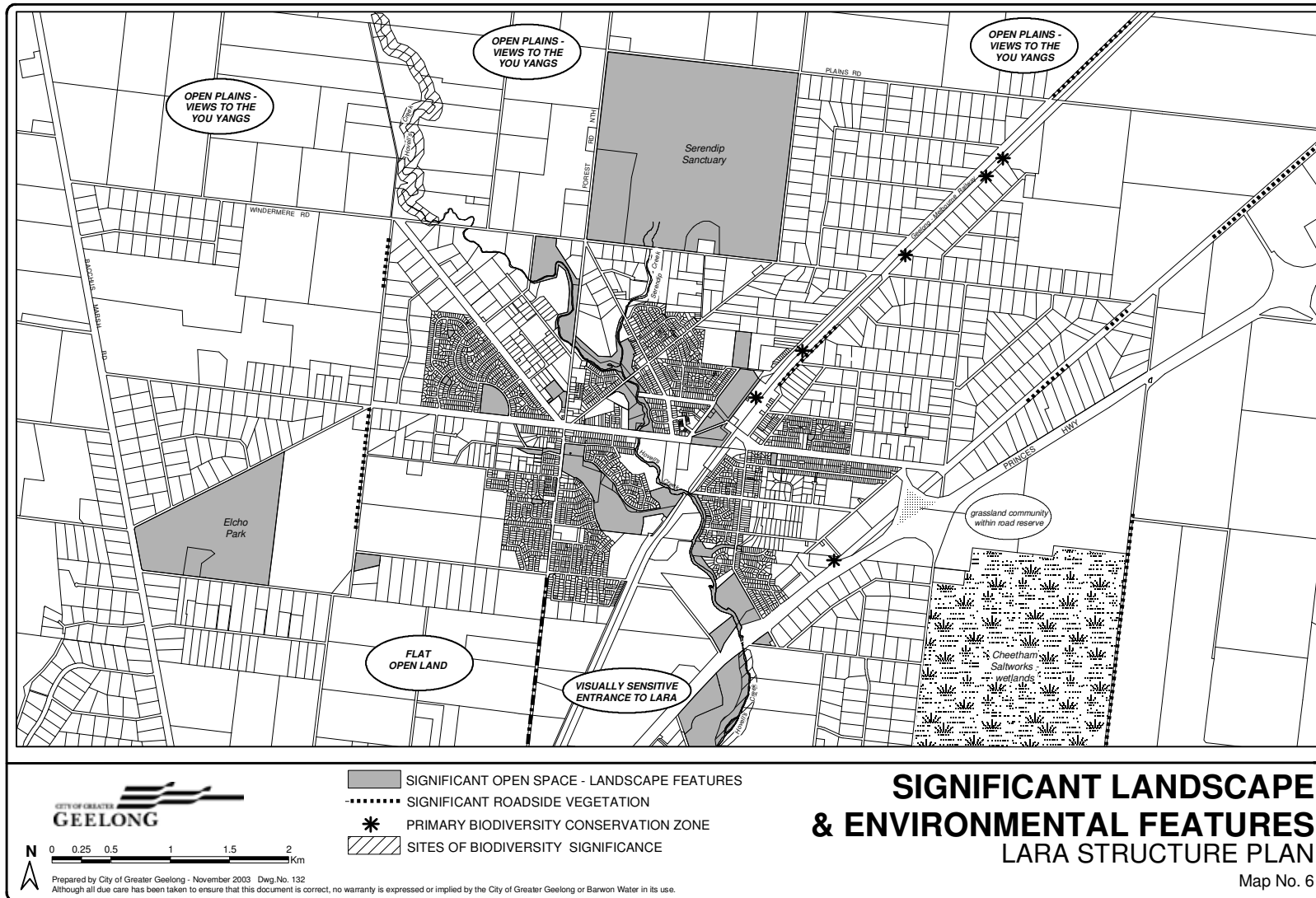
### **3.1.2 Geology and Soils**

Limestone is the main bedrock underlying Lara with the area east of Hovells Creek overlaid by clay and the west underlaid by basalt. The soils vary from duplex and uniform cracking clays to alluvial and sandy loams, and display differing percolation rates influencing the drainage capacity of parts of Lara.

These variances in geology and soils of the township render some areas of Lara more suitable for residential development than others. Those areas less suitable can generally be built on provided appropriate footings are utilised.



Map 6 – Environmental Features



## 3.2 Urban Environment

The urban environment in Lara is dominated by housing with the main commercial centre located centrally and within proximity the Lara Train Station. There are a number of constraints on urban growth within the Lara township which need to be considered when planning development.

### 3.2.1 Flooding

The propensity for land to flood or be inundated is a significant constraint to future development and needs to be considered in the strategic planning processes for Lara.

Lara has a long history of significant flood events, recorded in 1933, 1973, 1978, 1983 and 1988. Flooding in Lara occurs as Hovells Creek waterway type flooding events and flooding of sub-catchments within Lara from drainage-related flooding. The 1988 flood of Hovells Creek was the largest on record and resulted in the internal flooding of about 60 dwellings in the township. This flood event of Hovells Creek is considered equivalent to the 100 year average recurrence interval (ARI) flood event.

The geography of the township is such that Lara is “located on the lower reaches of Hovells Creek at the confluence with Serendip Creek. The catchment of both Hovells and Serendip Creeks are rural in nature.” (WBM 2002 study) As described in the 1985 Lara Structure Plan *“The Elcho Creek system and Hovells Creek converge immediately south of Lara. Both creeks are liable to flooding, although the intensity and type of flooding varies. Hovells Creek creates a wide flood plain which bisects the township and inundates several established residential areas. Flooding in much of this area consists of deep, fast-flowing water, the most damaging type of flooding. Along most of the Elcho Creek system, a different type of flooding occurs, caused by poor natural drainage of the flat land. Considerable areas of land are inundated by sheets of water which are normally shallow and slow flowing.”*

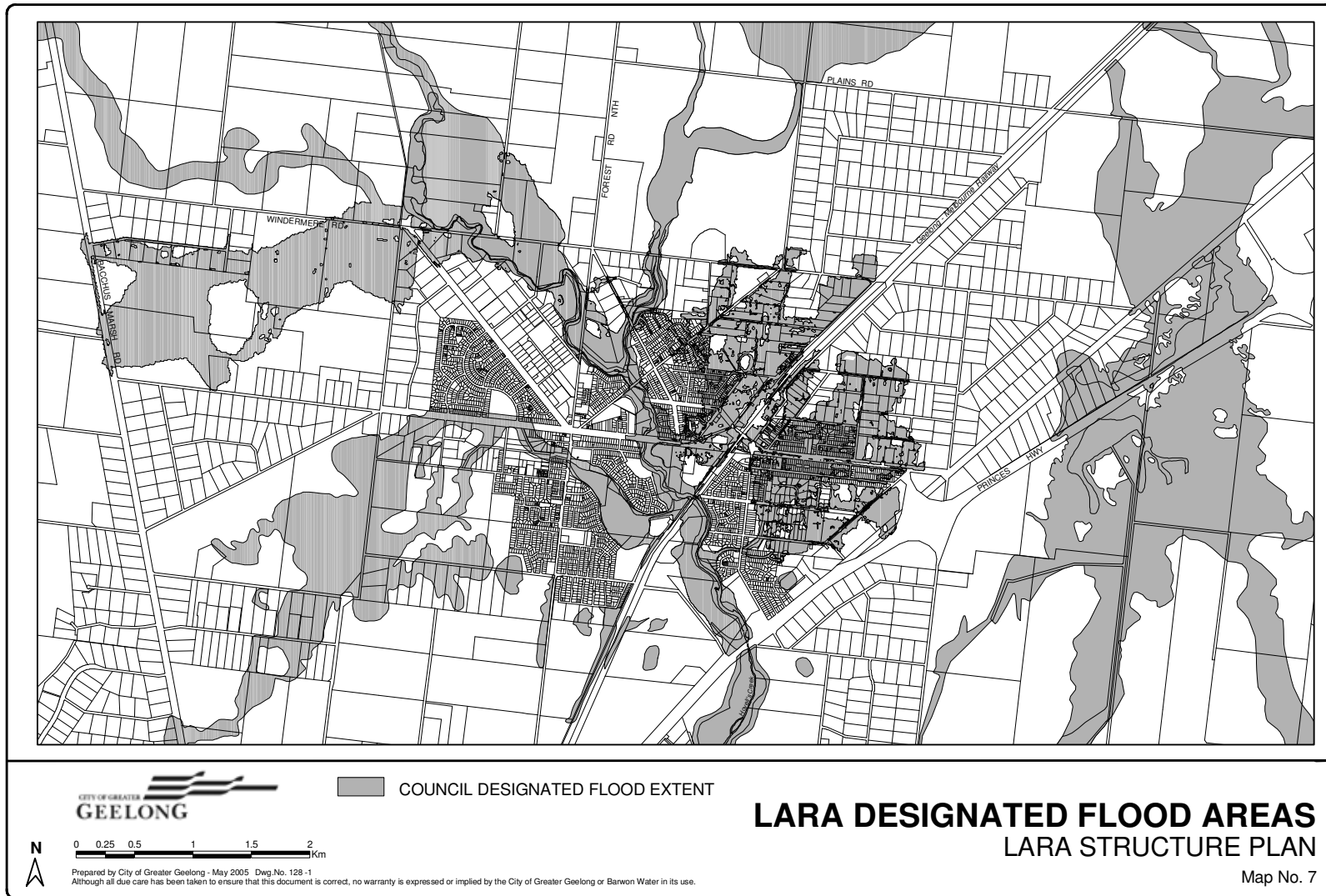
Not all flooding in Lara is caused by significant rainfall events. Lack of overland flood conveyance and lack of grade for underground drainage systems affect parts of Lara. The Northeast Lara catchment is characterised by very flat, low and conventional density residential development and some limited commercial uses. The North East Lara Flood Study 2002 identifies that the flood conveyance through this area is significantly constrained due to a significant lack of grade for underground drainage and the lack of overland flow paths through the main developed areas. Flooding in the north east of Lara is generally not related to flooding in Hovells Creek as its elevation is some 10 metres above the Creek’s floodplain. Historical flooding of the area has been attributed to its flat nature.

The area to the north of McClelland Avenue around Kyema Drive and The Esperence has been observed to be flood prone. It is characterised by low-lying land with little or no opportunity for overland flood conveyance. In a significant rainfall event the underground drainage network becomes full and as a result, water ponds in the area causing localised flooding.

In response to some of the flooding problems in Lara *“A range of flood mitigation strategies have been implemented in the town including the construction of levees based on the 1988 flood level plus 600mm minimum freeboard. In addition, a flood warning system and flood response plan have also been established.”* (WBM 2002 study)

The Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA) is the floodplain management authority for the region and has a key role in managing regional flooding issues in the Catchment. The CCMA has provided Council with flood data for Lara and Council has adopted this as its designated flood maps. In 2004, Council undertook further detailed flood mapping for the eastern area of Lara. The new flood extent was designated by Council on 26 October 2004 and has been included in Map 7 which shows the Lara designated flood areas.

Map 7 – Designated Flood Areas



### **3.2.2 The Geelong – Melbourne Non Urban Break**

A long held planning principle of the Geelong Region has been to retain a non-urban break between Geelong and Melbourne and similar breaks between the townships within the region. The separation of Geelong from Melbourne/Werribee has been an important planning principle for a number of reasons:

- It ensures Geelong retains its own image and identity, rather than being merged into Melbourne as an additional suburb.
- It gives a sense of containment to the urban sprawl of the cities of Melbourne and Geelong and provides “lungs” for these cities.
- It ensures that environmentally sensitive areas such as the You Yangs and Ramsar Wetlands continue to be fully protected.
- It protects Avalon Airport from encroaching residential and rural residential development.
- It ensures that the Melbourne Water sewerage treatment complex and farm continue to be protected from urban encroachment; and
- It maintains rural farming areas for agricultural pursuits.

The retention of the non-urban break is an objective of the Structure Plan and has been taken into account in developing future land use directions for the Lara township.

### **3.2.3 Heales Road Industrial Estate**

South of Lara and immediately north of urban Geelong is the Heales Road Industrial Estate (some 457 hectares of land) which is included in the Industrial 1 and 2 zones. This area has developed with a number of substantial operations including the Shell and Heatane Gas fuel depots, the Elders Woolstores, the BWK wool scouring plant and several smaller but significant industries.

The area was first identified and set aside by the former Geelong Regional Commission as a major industrial estate capable of providing sites for future large scale industries wishing to establish in the Geelong Region. It has good access to road and rail transport, availability of services, is close to a port and a skilled labour force. The estate is not fully developed and clearly has the potential to grow beyond its present scale.

The estate has excellent access to the Princes Highway, rail and port facilities, Melbourne and is uninhibited by environmental, flooding or other natural constraints. The estate comprises a mixture of large and small developed and vacant lots. Around 60% of the large lots (greater than 5 hectares) are undeveloped and provide the sites for the location of new industries.

The Geelong Industrial Land Study (January 2001) identified the development potential for large-scale industry as good given its large parcels of undeveloped land and potential for consolidation of the smaller land holdings. The area is attractive to heavy industry or industries requiring a significant buffer from residential and rural residential development. Warehousing and distribution industries also have potential to locate to Heales Road to utilise the site’s access to the Princes Highway.

Further expansion of the Heales Road Industrial Estate and development of some industry types is constrained by existing rural residential and residential areas on the western, northern and southern boundaries of the estate and the Geelong to Melbourne railway line in the east. Development of the southwestern part of the estate is currently restricted due to the lack of services and the allotment pattern. The land in this area comprises an old and inappropriate subdivision of small residential lots. Council is actively seeking consolidation of this land into useable industrial lots. Existing rural residential zones on the western and northern boundaries and existing residential zones on the southern boundary may limit the full range of potential industrial uses able to comply with the EPA buffer guidelines.

The need for existing and proposed development to be compatible from a safety perspective is also paramount in maintaining a buffer between the industrial estate and its existing and potential industries.

Another potential constraint is finite conventional sewerage capacity that would restrict industries with large wastewater outputs. Barwon Water is currently reviewing options for augmentation of the trunk sewer system serving the northern areas of the City. The review is particularly relevant because of the existing constraints to development imposed by the limited capacity of the sewerage system.

The presence of the Heales Road Industrial Estate poses constraints on the southward residential expansion of Lara. The EPA has produced recommended buffer distances for those industries that may cause uncontrolled or accidental emissions of air pollution, apart from the controlled discharges for which they may be licensed. Such discharges are called 'industrial residual air emissions'.

These emissions may cause intermittent nuisance, primarily due to odour, to anyone within a certain distance around the offending plant. Accordingly, it is prudent to maintain a buffer distance around a variety of industrial uses and sensitive uses such as residential areas, hospitals, schools, etc. The EPA has therefore published a list of Industrial Residual Air Emission Buffer (IRAEB) distances.

Planning for the Heales Road Industrial Estate has for many years maintained a 1000 metre buffer around the estate (see Map 8). In order to ensure as wide a range of land uses as possible can establish in the industrial estate, the range of land uses in the buffer area needs to be strictly limited to minimise the potential effects of development on the Heales Road estate. This has been to prevent the intrusion of sensitive uses, namely residential and rural residential uses, from developing close to the industrial estate. Accordingly, there is no prospect of residential or rural residential zones being created within the 1000 metre buffer from the northern boundary of the industrial zone and the southern extents of the Lara township.

For the area between Heales Road Industrial Estate and Lara, the North Eastern Area Strategic Land Use Plan outlined the preferred future use as intensive horticultural activity utilising treated effluent from a high-grade sewerage treatment plant for Lara. Uses such as market gardening, flower and tree growing, hydroponics, turf farming and golf courses or public park lands, are all uses capable of using treated effluent.

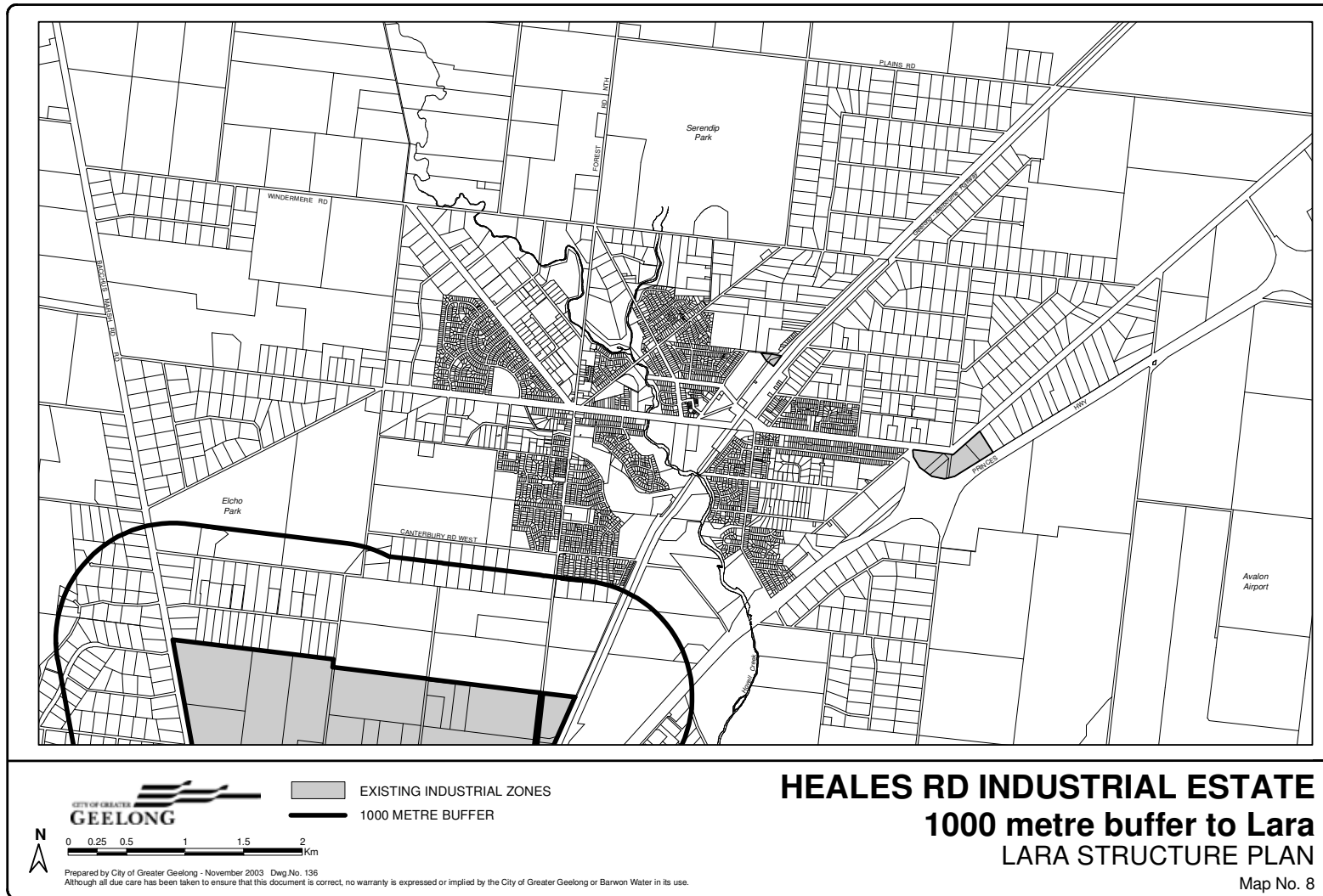
The recent use of a portion of this area for a cemetery is an example of another land use well suited to the buffer area.

In 2007 the Heales Road Industrial Estate Framework Plan was prepared (see Map 9). The implementation of the Framework Plan has seen the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme amended to rezone 85ha of land fronting the Geelong Ring Road to the Industrial 1 Zone and reduce the minimum lot size from 5ha to 4000sqm catering for the development of a range of industries seeking high amenity, high exposure sites. The Framework also provided for a Development Plan Overlay and a Design and Development Overlay to improve amenity on the estate via appropriate infrastructure upgrades, landscaping, open space provision, subdivision and development requirements and complementary urban design initiatives. In particular, the proposed new subdivision and development requirements are designed to ensure that the southern part of the estate presents a highly attractive frontage to the Geelong Ring Road. The Plan was approved via a Ministerial Amendment in 2008.

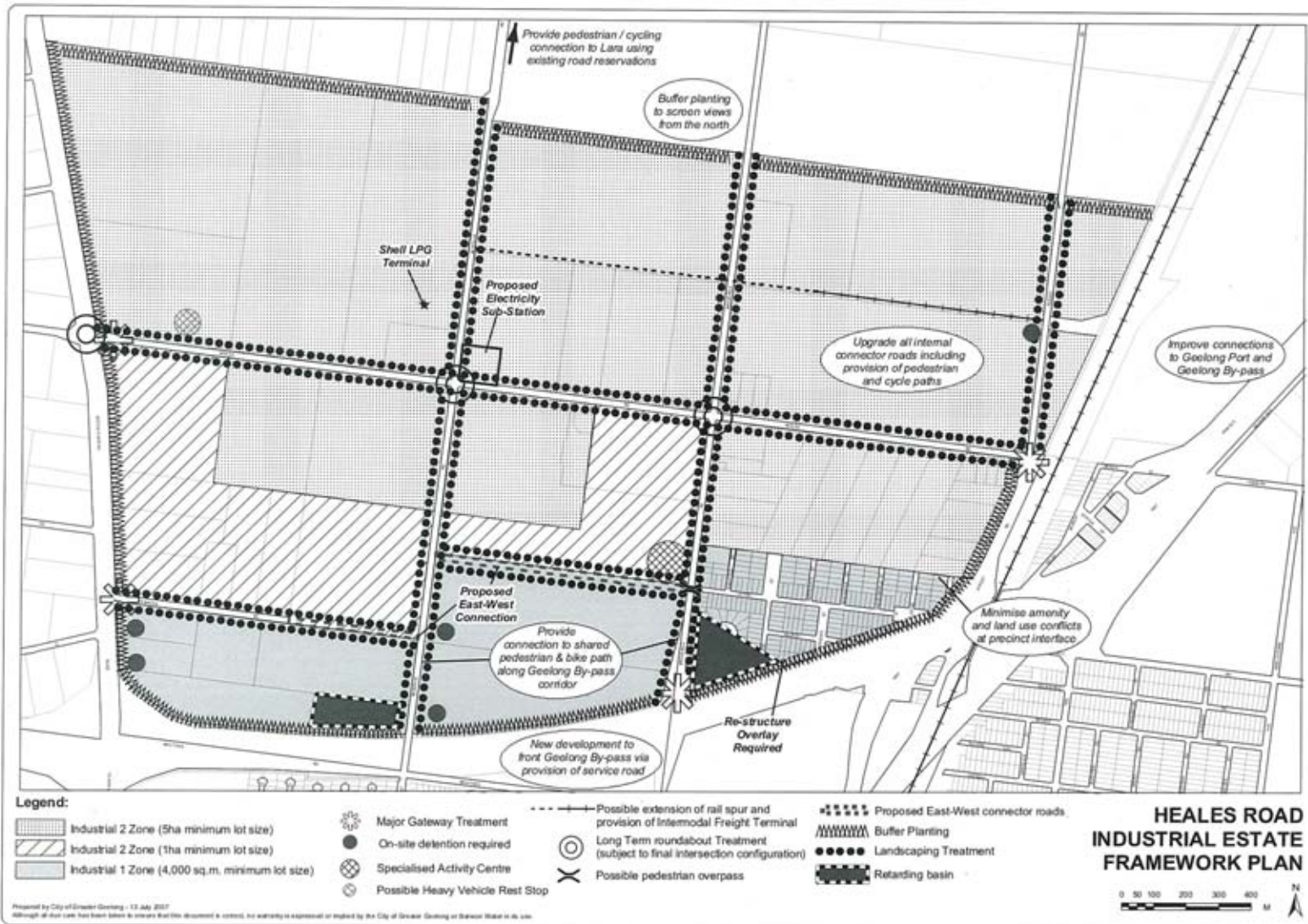


Looking across the Heales Road Industrial Estate to the Incitec Pivot site.

**Map 8 – Heales Road Industrial Estate Buffer**



Map 9 - Heales Road Industrial Estate Framework Plan



### **3.2.4 Avalon Airport**

Avalon Airport is located approximately five kilometres to the east of Lara fronting the Princes Highway. The airport and surrounds consist of approximately 1750 hectares of land. It has a 3048 m runway (one of the longest in Australia) and is capable of landing B747 and larger aircraft. It has 5km of taxiways, 32 ha of sealed surfaces, modern navigational aids, refuelling facilities suitable for all major aircraft, air traffic control and rescue and fire fighting services. It has a passenger terminal capable of handling over 1,500,000 passenger movements per year and car parking for over 2000 vehicles and 55,000sqm of hangar space including three B747 hangars. Pilot training at the site involves aircraft flying circuits over the surrounding rural areas – the outskirts of Lara and Little River. Avalon also has status as an international airport with international customs clearance for freight and quarantine facilities. No curfew exists for flying operations.

The airport was originally constructed in 1952 as a base for government funded aircraft manufacturing projects including the production of military aircraft. In 1959, Qantas established a training base at the site, and the runway was extended to cater for jet aircraft. It continued to be used to build military aircraft until the 1980s, and for aircraft maintenance until 1996.

Avalon was sold to Linfox in 1997, at this time there were around 150 staff working on a defence project. Linfox has introduced new business operations and subsequently over 1000 new jobs since 1997. Qantas B747 maintenance and refurbishment has delivered most of the new jobs with the Airport now employing around 1400 people not including those employed by supporting industries and it is now considered a major employment and economic contributor for the region.

The Airport is home to low cost airline Jetstar owned by QANTAS which offers flights direct to Avalon from Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth. Since the first Jetstar began operating on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2004 daily flights have increased from 4 to 13 and over 1,000,000 passengers a year pass through the facility

The Airport is also the site of the biennial major Avalon International Airshow and Aerospace Exhibition which started in 1992 and involves around 200,000 visitors, from over 50 countries. The airshow is now the world's fourth largest and it generates economic benefits for the local, state and national economy.

The Airport is working towards finalising a Major Development Plan which the Federal Government requires prior to approving the establishment of an international passenger terminal. The proposed development includes a 7,500sqm international passenger terminal with external areas for baggage handling facilities. The terminal is designed to be extended if future expansion is required. It will include an entrance foyer; facilities for passenger security screening, customs, passport control, quarantine, passenger lounges, retail and café amenities. The proposed international passenger terminal will be located to the east of the existing domestic terminal.

Avalon airport is a significant State and regional transport facility and is a major asset to the region. Avalon has large areas of under utilised land available for potential development. Linfox will continue to investigate opportunities that complement existing operations and facilities. Surrounding land uses and activities need to be managed to ensure airport operations are not restricted and future opportunities are protected.



Entrance to Avalon Airport



### 3.2.5. Intermodal Transport Facility

A number of studies have been completed to investigate and develop opportunities for an intermodal transport facility on a privately owned site north of the Lara township (see Map 10) The site is 670 hectares and has a number of attributes including a large area available for container storage, warehouses and other buildings, large frontage to rail reserve and its proximity and direct access to the Princes Highway.

A Development Opportunity Plan has been developed to look at the opportunities and constraints of the site, see Map 11.

The nomination of the Lara site as the preferred option is consistent with the State Government's policy of encouraging the development of intermodal transport facilities as primarily, private sector-led investments. The land is currently used for hobby farming and is zoned for Farming. An amendment to rezone land would be required prior to industrial development of this site.

**Map 10 – Proposed Intermodal Transport Facility Location**



Map 11 – Intermodal Transport Facility Development Opportunity Plan



### 3.2.6 Town Centre

The main retail/commercial centre of Lara is located in and around The Centreway. The Centreway contains around 3,800sqm of retail floor space, including a Safeway supermarket of approximately 1,400sqm. Other non-retail commercial functions in the Town Centre comprise around 1,400sqm of floor space, including Australia Post, medical services, three banks and other professional services. The buildings are typically single storey with only four double storey buildings in the centre. The area is serviced by 243 car parking spaces including private off street spaces. This precinct is zoned Business 1 Zone.



The retail precinct of Lara, the Centreway including strip shops and the supermarket

There is a small shopping strip, the Six Ways, located just outside the town centre, comprising 800sqm floor space. It includes take away food, a newsagent, milk bar and some medical facilities (physiotherapy). The centre is almost fully tenanted. Car parking is provided on street, with 35 degree angle parking.



The Six Ways local shopping strip

A large proportion of shopping currently carried out by Lara residents occurs at the sub-regional centre at Corio which has a variety of supermarkets, specialty stores and discount department stores.

#### Urban Design Framework

A Lara Town Centre Urban Design Framework (2006) has been prepared by David Lock Associates. The Framework makes the following statements about the town centre:

- The existing role of the Lara Town Centre is simply to serve the basic convenience retail needs of the local population. Residents in Lara have to travel outside the town for many basic retail needs, such as clothing and many food and grocery items.
- The Safeway supermarket has a 'limited range' in that it does not stock the full range of items available in large or 'full line' supermarkets. This limits the ability of the Town Centre to serve the basic weekly grocery requirements of Lara residents.
- There is substantial 'escape' spending from the trade area. Residents generally have to travel outside Lara for many basic retail needs such as clothing and many food and grocery items. Escape spending from Lara is estimated at around 75% of retail spending.
- Major competition to the Lara town centre is Corio Village Shopping Centre, located 15 minutes drive from Lara. It comprises of two full line supermarkets, numerous specialty stores and extensive car parking. The Centre is well patronised by Lara residents.
- The town centre is separated by open space and the railway line creating two distinct parts of town.

Having considered the above it is apparent that the town centre needs to be examined in detail and revitalised in order to better serve the local community. The Framework provides a master plan for the town centre and makes a number of recommendations to enhance the aesthetics and usability of the area. These include:

1. *Facilitate future growth*

- Upgrade the train station precinct
- Improve services in the town centre
- Increase lifestyle choice
- Provide additional office or non-retail space
- Promote the development of new retail facilities

2. *Reduce escape expenditure*

- Increase retail offer and choice in the town centre
- Increase car park efficiency
- Increase the number of car parking spaces
- Create a successful movement network
- Facilitate town centre management
- Promote events

3. *Promote Sustainable transport, access and movement*

- Create a new Transit Interchange at the Lara station
- Expand the number of commuter car parks at the transport interchange
- Enhance links and access to the Transit Interchange
- Promote pedestrian and bicycle connections in and around the town centre

4. *Enhance and strengthen the public realm*

- Enhance Austin Park
- Create social spaces
- Introduce new coordinated street furniture
- Extend the shelter
- Improve footpath surfaces
- Improve lighting
- Balance the needs of pedestrians and cars
- Enhance interpretation and directional pedestrian signage

**3.2.7 Streetscapes and Residential Character**

Lara has a number of attributes that together form its character:

- A number of significant stands of trees (exotic and natives) on private and public land
- Non-urban road construction details outside of the town centre e.g. gravel road shoulders.
- Views of the You Yangs to the north.
- Scattered nature of housing development.
- Predominantly single storey houses in garden settings.
- Substantial setbacks from the road.
- No fencing or rural fencing to demarcate properties.

The City of Greater Geelong Residential Character Study – Character Precinct Brochures 2001 has outlined the following vision statement for Lara:

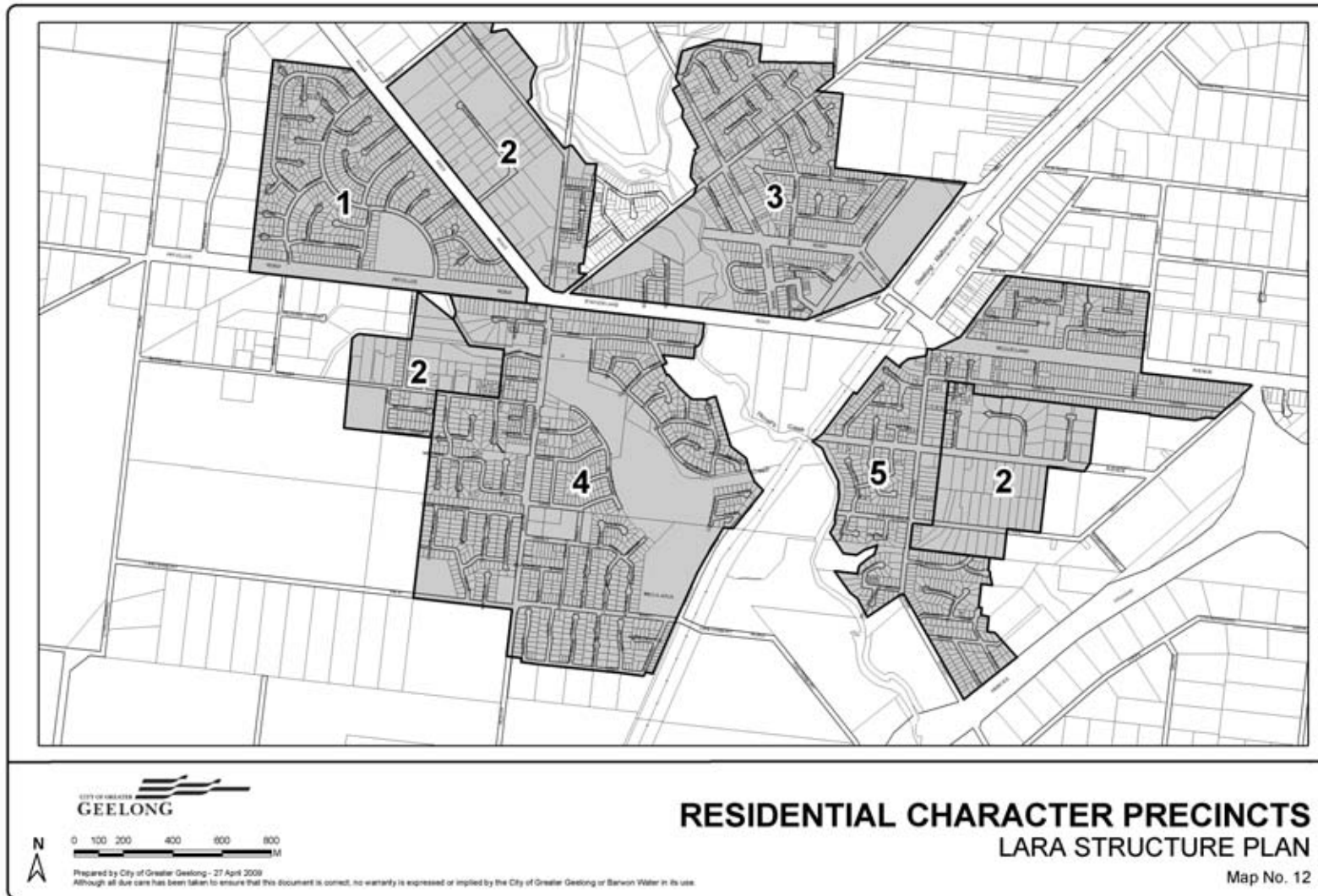
*Lara will retain and strengthen its identity as a country township surrounded by open rural land, and its diversity will be unified by:*

- *Ensuring the siting of buildings to reflect spacing patterns.*
- *Ensuring building form and scale reflects predominant patterns.*
- *Encouraging the use of indigenous and native vegetation in public and private planting schemes.*
- *Encouraging open front boundary treatments.*

This vision will also be achieved by avoiding large, bulky buildings with high site coverage, exclusive use of exotic tree species, front fencing, and boundary to boundary development. As Lara is made up of a number of different estates and periods of development, the Residential Character Study has identified 5 distinct precincts (shown on Map 12) for which there are also preferred character statements.

Development of new areas for which there are no preferred character statements, should implement the elements of the vision, the principles of water sensitive urban design and the subdivision principles.

Map 12 – Residential Character Precincts



### **3.2.8 Protecting Residential Streetscapes and Character**

A number of existing controls are included within the Planning Scheme to assist in protecting the valued elements of the streetscapes and residential character. The Residential Character Precinct Brochures are the tools which apply to Lara.

The Residential Character Brochures outlined above are a reference document within the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme. As such developments which require planning approval such as multi dwellings and the development of dwellings over 7.5 meters in height, must be assessed and considered against the guidelines contained within the Brochures.

### **3.2.9 Recommended Planning Scheme Controls for Residential Areas**

The adopted Housing Diversity Strategy seeks to support medium density housing within a 400m walkable catchment of the town centre and encouraging a more responsive built form in other residential areas by revising the Rescode standards relating to on site open space provision. This is being implemented as part of C129 currently being considered for adoption by the Minister for Planning.

## **3.3 Rural Environment**

Lara forms part of the northern sector which is largely class 3 quality with some areas class 2 (in this scale class 1 is very high quality and class 5 is not suitable for soil based agriculture). Land is still largely in parcels of productive size, including a significant number of lots over 100ha. The Rural Land Use Strategy (2007) proposes this area should be maintained for agricultural use and opportunities for the use of reclaimed water around Balliang should be protected. There are opportunities for some intensive animal industries in this part of the City, subject to compliance with relevant Codes of Practice, and landscape impact considerations. Development adjacent to the You Yangs and Brisbane Ranges should be limited and carefully managed to protect these features.

East of Lara is the township of Avalon which has Avalon airport, a significant State and regional transport facility. In relation to the rural strategy for Geelong and its wider region there are significant opportunities for export of high quality produce. This strategy proposes that the integrity, operating capacity and potential for development of the facility should be protected and existing buffer areas for safe operation be maintained. In terms of rural land use land to the east and south of the Princes Highway and of the airport provides potential for shed based horticulture and agriculture that can use the airport for transportation to markets. Such activities should be supported as a part of the agricultural economy of Geelong.

Boomaroo Nurseries is located to the east of Lara, south of Plains Road, north of McIntyre Road and east of the Melbourne-Geelong Railway line and St Andrews Drive. The site comprises about 120 hectares, with Boomaroo's established seedling production facilities covering about 32 hectares and the balance of the site (about 88 hectares) is open rural land. The Nursery produces vegetable seedlings as well as conducting research and development including technological advancements. The Nursery is one of Australia's largest seedling suppliers, supplying around 250 million seedlings to vegetable growers in South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria providing a significant boost to local employment and the economy.

Boomaroo Nurseries has previously shown interest in developing the balance of land not used as part of production for rezoning to Rural Living. This proposal is not supported given the current lot supply, the fact the land is outside the settlement boundary, the policy not to create any more Rural Living allotments, the need to protect agricultural opportunities and the need to protect opportunities for Avalon Airport and the proposed intermodal transport facility.

The Greyhound Industry also makes an important and significant contribution to the local and regional economy. The focus of the greyhound industry is in the area around the Lara Greyhound Education Centre located on the eastern fringe of the Lara township. This area is currently zoned Farming Zone which is considered the most suitable zone for such operations under Councils proposed Local

Planning Policy 22.07- Dog Keeping and Racing Dog Training which directs these activities to the Farming Zone subject to certain conditions being satisfied. Any rural residential (Rural Living) development in the area could see greater restrictions placed on these activities and is not considered this would serve the industry in this particular precinct.

The rural land surrounding the Lara township has important roles including the protection of agricultural opportunities, preserving a non-urban break and buffers from more intensive land uses to residential uses, protecting future growth opportunities and the rural setting of the township and key views to the You Yangs.

### **3.4 Key Influences**

- The need to support public land managers to assist in the on-going management of the environment.
- The need to prevent urban development encroaching into flood prone areas and impacting on the flow and quality of flood waters.
- The need to maintain buffers to Avalon Airport and the Heales Road Industrial Estate.
- The need to protect opportunities for the proposed intermodal transport facility.
- There is a need and demand for increased retail space within the town centre.
- There is opportunity to improve the town centre's appearance and functionality.
- The need to ensure new development reflects the character of the Lara township.
- The need to protect productive rural land from urban encroachment and inappropriate uses.



## **4.0 Demographics & Social Profile**

Just as the physical and strategic conditions, capabilities and constraints are important to the future planning for Lara, the population profile is equally vital to understanding the needs for growth and future service provision for the local community. This section documents the population, residential lot supply and provides a brief Lara community profile.

### **4.1 Past Population Growth**

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics census demonstrates that during the period between 1986 and 2006 the population of Lara (Urban Centre) has increased from 5,186 people to 10,525 people. The table below provides details on population growth.

**Table 2 – Population Growth**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Growth Rate % p.a.</b>
1986	5,186	-	-
1991	6,324	+1,138	+4.38
1996	7,338	+1,014	+3.2
2001	9,206	+1,868	+5.09
2006	10,525	+1,319	+2.05

### **4.2 Estimated Population in 2008**

Council forecasting software, I.d Forecast nominates the 2008 population at 11, 682 for Lara.

### **4.3 Age Structure**

Census data provides information on the demographics of the township including age distribution. In 2006, 43.9% of the Lara population was aged between 25 and 54 with the median age being 34 years old. The table below shows statistics from the 2006 census.

**Table 3- Age Structure**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Lara</b>	<b>% of total persons in Lara</b>
0-4 years	837	8%
5-14 years	1,751	16.6%
15-24 years	1,332	12.7%
25-54 years	4,617	43.9%
55-64 years	945	9%
65 years and over	1,042	9.9%

In the 2006 Census, of the 3841 households in Lara 2,921 or 76% of them are made up of families. The family characteristics were as follows; 52.8% were couple families with children, 32.1% were couple families without children, 14.0% were one parent families and 1.0% were other families.

In Lara there were 645 lone person households making up 16.7% of the population whilst in the Geelong Region the figure is approximately 25%, reinforcing the notion that Lara is popular for families.

#### 4.4 Dwellings & Household Size

The average household size within Lara in 2006 was 2.83, slightly lower than the 2001 data of 2.91, but still higher than the average for the rest of the municipality at 2.45. The distribution of households size within the township is displayed below.

**Table 4 - Household Sizes**

Household Size	Number of People
One	631
Two	1,065
Three	624
Four	778
Five	322
Six or more	109

In 2006, of the *Occupied Private Dwellings* within the township 41.9% were recorded as being fully owned and 39.6% being purchased. Renting accounted for 14.05%, whilst the remainder 4.5% is not stated.

#### 4.5 Labour Force & Income

The ABS Census data identifies the “labour force” as consisting of persons aged 15 years and over who are employed, or those who do not have a job but are actively looking for work.

In 2006, 27,817 people in Lara were in the labour force. Of these:

- 58.5% were employed full-time
- 27.5% were employed part-time
- 3.4% were employed but away from work
- 3.0% were employed but did not state their hours worked
- 7.6% were unemployed

According to the 2006 census the most common responses for occupation for employed persons in Lara were:

**Table 5 – Labour Force**

Occupation	Percentage of people
Technicians and Trades Workers	17.8%
Clerical and Administrative Workers	14.3%
Labourers	14.2%
Machinery Operators And Drivers	11.5%
Professionals	11.2%

In Lara the median weekly individual income was \$392, compared with \$466 in Australia. The median weekly household income was \$916, compared with \$1,027 in Australia and the median weekly family income was \$1,067, compared with \$1,171 in Australia.

#### 4.6 Journey to Work

ABS Census data for 2006 demonstrates that the private car is the dominant mode of transport. On census night, for those that use a single mode of transport, the private car (includes both drivers and passengers) was used by 91% of employed persons in Lara to travel to work. The other methods of transport were 4.8% catch a train, other 3.8%, 1.3% walked, 1% truck, 0.5% bike, 0.3% bus and 0.2% motorbike/scooter.

These statistics reinforce Lara as a commuter town with the majority of people travelling outside the township to their place of employment.

#### 4.7 Socio-Economic Index

The ABS produces a Socio Economic Index for the Areas which considers Advantage/Disadvantage and takes into account variable relating to income, education, occupation, wealth and living conditions. This data rates Lara as reasonable with a SEFIA score of 1038.8. The rating for the municipality was 992.9 with the range of ratings between 993 and 1113.3.

#### 4.8 Population Projection 2030

Council's population projections are based on its forecast modelling system, 'i.d Forecast'. In forecasting population the program uses a number of factors based on ABS data, including residential development, migration, fertility and death rates and non-private dwellings are all taken into account when forecasting population.

**Table 6 - Projected Population based on 'i.d Forecast'**

Summary Data	Year				
	2008	2012	2018	2024	2030
Total Population	11,682	12,647	14,546	14,893	14,817
Households	3,950	4,352	5,120	5,375	5,458
Dwellings	4,004	4,411	5,190	5,448	5,532
Avg Household size	2.77	2.74	2.7	2.64	2.58

**Table 7 - Estimated Population at Critical Age Cohorts based on 'i.d Forecast'**

Age (years)	Population		
	2012	2016	2021
0 – 4	823	922	932
5 – 11	1,338	1,458	1,466
12 – 17	1,133	1,252	1,295
18 – 24	1,125	1,260	1,330
25 – 34	1,810	2,039	2,032
35 – 49	2,948	3,187	3,265
50 - 59	1,503	1,639	1,775
60 -69	1,079	1,313	1,434
70-79	692	851	1,126
80 plus	192	204	206

As a time comparison over the past 30 years, Lara is:

- Aging overall.
- Younger than the City overall.
- Representative of a high number of young families – with primary and secondary school age children.
- An increase in the number of school aged children.
- Remains attractive to young families.
- An attractive commuter suburb and will retain a mix of young/middle families.
- A small decline in population from 2024 to 2030.
- Increase in the number aged 60 and over.

This information conveys that service planning and delivery for Lara needs to focus on the needs of families such as education, recreation and leisure, health and commercial services.

## 4.9 Key Influences

- Lara will continue to receive strong population growth.
- Lara will continue to have a high proportion of families which is important when considering community infrastructure, facilities and housing diversity.
- Employment and journey to work data indicates that the majority of Lara residents in the work force, are employed outside the township.
- The residents of the township rely almost entirely upon private cars for transport.

## **5.0 Township Facilities & Services**

### **5.1 Local Community Services and Facilities**

Lara is a well serviced town with a large range of government and other facilities and services. These are important for meeting the needs of residents, bringing people together, providing a sense of community, and for fostering leisure and recreation activities. The key community facilities in Lara are shown on Map 13. They are:

- 
- |                                       |                                  |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Community Centre                    | • Three Kindergartens            |
| • Maternal and Child Health Centre    | • Three Primary Schools          |
| • Churches                            | • One Secondary School           |
| • Lara Hall                           | • Country Fire Authority Station |
| • Golf Course                         | • Police Station                 |
| • Swimming Pool                       | • Three Child Care Centres       |
| • Bus Services                        | • Town Centre Shopping Centre    |
| • Railway Station                     | • Minor Strip Shopping Centre    |
| • Senior Citizens Centre              | • Lara Neighbourhood House       |
| • St Laurence Park Aged Accommodation | • Mobile Library Service         |
| • Skatepark                           | • Bowling Club                   |
| • Open Space Parks/Sports Ovals       | • RSL                            |
| • Gymnasium                           | • Two Medical Centres            |
- 

The City of Greater Geelong also provides other services such as home and community care and meals on wheels to Lara residents.

#### *Health Services*

Lara has two medical centres each with around eight General Practitioners. The Lara Medical Centre is not accepting new patients and the You Yangs Medical Centre is only accepting patients from Lara. There are also a number of allied health services including physiotherapy, pathology, dietician, chiropractor, dental and a podiatrist.



The Lara Medical Centre

#### *Education Facilities*

Lara has three primary schools including two State schools and one private school. The Lara Primary School located in Flinders Avenue currently accommodates around 600 students with a capacity to increase to a maximum of 1000. In comparison, the Lara Lake Primary School on Forest Road South is a smaller campus with approximately 589 students. There is also a Catholic Primary School located in Kees Road.

The Lara Secondary College opened in 2003 and now caters for Year 7 - 12 with around 800 students. There is no privately operated secondary school in Lara.

Residential development has commenced in the Canterbury Road West area (Grand Lakes) and the need for additional education facilities could be generated as the population increases. Planning with Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) will be required when considering any rezoning and subdivision proposals of the area to determine if additional education facilities are required and achieve a suitable site for such facilities. A notional location for an education facility has been nominated within the Grand lakes estate.

Traffic management around the Lara Primary School and Lara Secondary College is a significant issue for parents, students, Council, the schools and DEECD. The combination of two schools at the one site, similar pick-up times and lack of road frontages creates traffic congestion and safety concerns for all.

It is recognised that there is a need to provide a safe and relatively convenient location for pick-up/drop off. There may be an opportunity to create an interchange at the schools site as part of a rezoning or as part of a Lara Recreation Reserve re-development.

#### *Lara Library*

There has been an expression of interest from the community for a permanent library facility to be developed and operated in Lara.

The on-going success of a library in Lara will be enhanced if the following factors are included in the design and development phase:

- The public library must be located where people normally go to shop or work, not where they reside/live.
- The visibility and accessibility of the library building is a vital factor in its success
- The library must be on the ground floor of the building, with strong visibility from the street, with east access and with adequate carparking.
- Shared facilities will be mutually beneficial if the needs of partners are identified in the design phase.
- Library patrons will use joint facilities that encompass a public library and retail or community services but the public will not use a joint facility that combines a public library and a school library.
- The net floorspace should be 42m<sup>2</sup> per 1,000 population of Lara.
- The public will always use larger libraries in preference to smaller libraries ('larger' refers to collections, range of services, hours of operation, staff levels, special programs, etc).

A site for a new permanent library at Lara is being considered as part of the Lara Town Centre Urban Design Framework (UDF). In 2009 there will be a temporary library located in Austin Park.

#### *Customer Service Centre*

As a significant township with planned additional urban growth as outlined in this Structure Plan, Lara does not have a Council customer service centre unlike the equivalent centres of Drysdale and Ocean Grove on the Bellarine Peninsula. The nearest centre is located at the Corio Village Shopping centre about 6 kilometres to the south west of Lara. The case for Lara to have a Customer Service Centre should be investigated.

#### *Pre-School Facility*

The Lara Lake Pre-School is located adjacent to the Lara Lake Primary School. Further stages are planned to meet community needs for social infrastructure and will include a Maternal and Child Health Service and Community Room/Hall and to expand the pre-school places to a total of 60. The provision of the new pre-school centre will meet an existing and future need of the Lara Lake community, particularly in light of the recommendation for the Canterbury Road West growth area.

Council has not yet committed funding or a timeframe to the commissioning of Stages 2 and 3. Planning ahead for these stages to coincide with the expected development in the growth area will be required to ensure that the services are provided in a timing manner for the new population.

### *Emergency Services*

Emergency services currently provided in Lara include a Police Station, Ambulance and Country Fire Authority station. Further growth of the township will necessitate continued provision of these services within Lara. The CFA has a new station facility on Mill Road and the Police have received State Government funding to construct a new station however a site has not been finalised at this time.

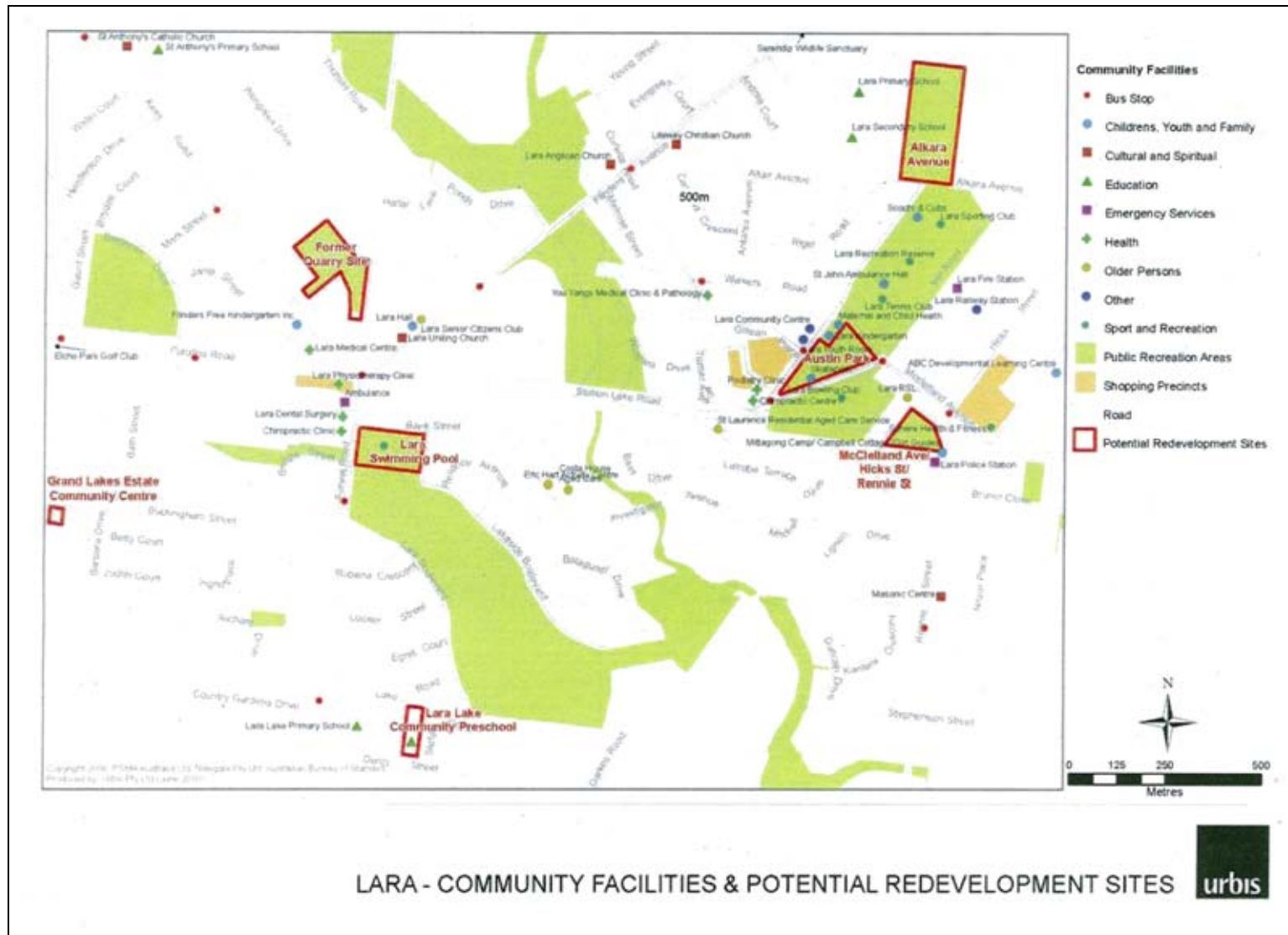
### *Community Centre*

The Lara Community centre was established in 1982 and aims to facilitate community development and provide opportunities for mutual support and sharing of skills and resources to build a better quality of life for the residents of Lara and the surrounding district. The Centre runs a range of adult and community education courses, volunteer programs to support community activities, programs for school children during school holidays, occasional childcare service as well as other activities.



The Lara Community Centre

Map 13 – Community Facilities





### Infrastructure Analysis, 2008

Council's Community Services Department have engaged consultants to produce the Lara Infrastructure Analysis, 2008. This report identifies the current services and facilities and looks at community needs now and into the future. The following needs have been identified for the future:

- More childcare spaces, in 2012 it is estimated 164 places will be required and in 2018, 188 spaces, there are currently 142 spaces.
- More kindergarten places, Lara could accommodate four kinders but if a planned expansion of the Lara Lake Kindergarten occurs this would meet imminent demand.
- The Lara Maternal and Child Health Centre is currently exceeding capacity.
- Existing Primary and Secondary schools can cater to current demands with future needs to be monitored.
- Other potential infrastructure requirements are a neighbourhood centre, community meeting rooms, youth facility, branch library, arts and cultural centre, aged care facilities, medical care facilities for general practitioners.
- The need to group activities/facilities into community 'hubs' to better serve the community.

### *Community Hubs*

The Lara Community Infrastructure Analysis has identified seven 'community hubs' (see map 13) to provide the services required to cater for the current and projected population.

#### Town Centre Hub (serving catchment of 15,000 people or more)

- Early Childhood services precinct including kindergarten, maternal and early childhood services, occasional childcare.
- Relocate You Yangs Medical Clinic and other allied fields to a central location to create a medical/health precinct.
- A branch library
- Police station relocated next to the CFA on Mill Road to create a emergency service precinct.

#### Local Neighbourhood Hubs (serving catchments of up to 5,000 people)

##### Lara Lake Community Pre-School Site

- Expansion of the kindergarten and a community space/hall providing opportunities for after school care, child care and a space for visiting health professionals.

##### Grand Lakes Estate

- Multi purpose facility for community gatherings and early childhood services including kindergarten, child care and maternal and child health. A local shop(s) supplying convenience items would also be beneficial.

#### Neighbourhood Hubs with specialist focus (serving wider catchment of up to 15,000 people)

##### Former Quarry Site

- Should be developed with a health focus and should be integrated with the existing senior citizens centre and could include day care and other health services that complement the nearby Lara Medical Centre.

##### Lara Swimming Pool Site

- Health and well being precinct which could include a full scale gym, the pool could also be heated year round and the Lara Hall relocated to this site to be used in association with well being activities.

Junction of Rennie Street, McClelland Avenue and Hicks Street

- Youth focused precinct with hall/recreation room and other flexible spaces. The skate park could be relocated here.

Lara Primary School and Lara Secondary School sites

- Education and learning precinct where there are opportunities for facilities to be used by the schools as well as the broader community.

## 5.2 Open Space, Leisure and Recreation Facilities

The City of Greater Geelong Study of Open Space Networks adopted by Council in September 2001 is the Council's comprehensive open space policy and strategy for the municipality.

The Lara Outdoor Recreation Facilities Study 2008 also provides a detailed assessment of the recreation facility requirements for Lara.

### 5.2.1 Public Open Space Assessment

A gap analysis and needs assessment for Lara was undertaken as part of the Networks Study 2001 and has been matched against demographics, trends and possible future use. As a result of this information and community feedback, the following actions were outlined in the Study, a comment on progress is also made:

- Develop a Linear Linkage route along the full length of the Hovells Creek Reserve including connection to the Hovells Creek Reserve trail and Bay trail south of the Princes Highway.  
*This has now been constructed; however the trail requires a pedestrian bridge over Hovells Creek to connect/link with trails within Lara Lake Lands. Once completed this path will link the trail to the You Yangs along Forest Rd Nth, beyond the northern boundary of Serendip Sanctuary. Parks Victoria aim to complete section of path within Serendip Sanctuary with Council has partially completed concrete sealing of path between Curletts Road and Windermere Road.*
- Develop Linear Linkage routes throughout Lara to link residential areas to major open spaces, Elcho Park, shopping precincts and schools and northward to the rural Northern Zone of the City.  
*This is identified as an action for the future.*
- Define future reserves for local Sports and Landscape and Amenity spaces in the northwest of the Sub-zone if future development heads in this direction. This is west of O'Hallorans Road and north of Patullos Road. Should land development fill in to the south of Lara, a reserve south of Canterbury Road may also be required.  
*This remains an important objective and Council is looking at options including land, facility or financial contributions as part of a development contribution.*
- Enhance opportunities for Landscape and Amenity and Informal Parks to the southeast of the sub zone through improvements to the undeveloped land to the southeast of Rennie Street.  
*Improvement projects for the Rennie St Reserve have been completed including pathways, shelters and rotunda.*

- As part of any future subdivisions, reserve land for the provision of a large informal Park in the northwest and south of the sub-zone, either in association with or separate from the sports reserves recommended above.

*This action is ongoing.*

- Ensure that all Informal Parks in future residential areas are of a sufficient size (e.g. 0.5 ha for local parks and 2 ha for sub regional parks) to sustain use diversity and that they are effectively linked by way of off-road Linear Linkage reserves to other open space sites and to community activity nodes.

*Recent work suggests sub-regional parks should be minimum of 4ha and preferably 8ha. This is a significantly larger area required than that area suggested in the Study of Open Space Networks (2001). Current best practice (refer Growth Area Authority Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines 2008) indicates a preferred size of 8 ha for active reserves. Further to this it is recommended that spatial allowance for on-site water storage be strongly considered in the case of active reserves to enhance sustainability and provide for future water needs of playing fields.*

- Undertake a landscape improvement program designed to enhance the quality of existing sites and to strengthen the sub-regional role of Lara Recreation Reserve, Elcho Park, the Hovells Creek Waterways, Rivers and Lakes site and the Lakeland Wetlands.

*A range of works are currently underway.*

## **5.2.2 Future Provision of Public Open Space and Recreation Facilities**

Open spaces play a vital role in the community. The existing pattern of open space in Lara has developed in an ad-hoc manner and there is an opportunity to provide a more integrated network of open spaces. The Open Space Study outlines recommendations to provide a network of open spaces that meets the needs of the community and the local environment.

A key element of this strategy focuses on the acquisition of land through subdivision and land development processes and recommends that:

*“Council engage in negotiations with developers as part of the planning scheme rezoning application process for new subdivisions in growth areas of the City that are not currently zoned as residential land. The aim is to provide an adequate quantity and variety of open space through appropriate development contributions incorporating a minimum 10% open space comprising of land and/or cash in lieu of land. Land provided as open space should be unencumbered unless otherwise approved as part of the negotiations process.”*

This Council policy enables the City to negotiate as part of a planning scheme amendment process to obtain an open space contribution higher than the 5% that is normally obtained as part of subdivisions under the Subdivision Act 1988. Accordingly, any new growth areas identified in this Structure Plan that require rezoning will be subject to negotiations for providing 10% of the area as open space (this shall generally be as land contribution rather than as cash).

This policy applies across the whole municipality and will be incorporated into the Planning Scheme as part of the review of the Municipal Strategic Statement. It is noted the final plan requires 10% open space but does not specify unencumbered.

The following outlines the existing open space network and opportunities for open space areas. These can also be seen on Map 14 below.

### *Hovells Creek Open Space*

Council is seeking to build upon the existing network of trails and paths to create a more integrated network of linear trails for pedestrian, cycle and, where appropriate, habitat links. Developing a linear linkage along the length of Hovells Creek including a connection to the Hovells Creek Reserve trail and Bay Trail south of the Princes Highway will add to the existing regional network. This pathway is now largely completed and Council is looking to continue the shared pathway to the You Yangs.

### *Austin Park*

Austin Park is centrally located within Lara, adjacent to The Centreway town centre. It is an important area of open space for the community as well as an area of 'green space' within the centre of town. The Park also contains a Kindergarten, Maternal Child Health Centre, skate park, public toilets and BBQ facilities. According to the City of Greater Geelong Outer Areas Heritage Study, an area of 12 acres was reserved in 1885 as Austin Park.

The adopted Lara Town Centre Urban Design Framework shows a reshaped and reconfigured Austin Park to allow for the proposed town centre expansion. Under The Framework Austin Park remains a focal point and key area of open space and would contain a new library, town square, playground, skatepark, kindergarten, maternal and child health centre, toilets, open space, pathways and landscaping including outdoor furniture. At the time of this review Council is working to implement the UDF which includes the resolution of complex issues relating to native title, Crown land transfer, engaging the private sector and approvals processes.



Austin Park

### *Lara Recreation Reserve*

The Lara Recreation Reserve was created in 1880 and is currently 6.99 hectares. It is an active sports reserve located between Mill Road and Waverly Road in Lara. It caters for football, soccer, cricket, tennis, netball, baseball, scouts and school physical education. The reserve is home ground for the Lara Sporting Club which includes football, netball, cricket, soccer, baseball, softball and Auskick. The Lara Sporting Club has an established social room and change facility on site.

The reserve is also used by the Lara Tennis Club, Lara Scouts and St Johns Ambulance Service. Lara Primary and Secondary Schools are directly adjacent to the reserve, with playing fields at the school being jointly used by the community outside school hours. School facilities, such as a basketball stadium are also used jointly by the community. The reserve is a highly valued open space area and is well utilised by the broader community.

Council has recently acquired two parcels of land adjacent to the reserve totalling approximately 10 hectares of additional open space. In 2008 as part of the Lara Outdoor Recreation Study short term and long term master plans were developed for the Reserve. The long term plan includes new cricket, football and baseball facilities, carparking, landscaping and change rooms. The master plan also recommends Council consider options to acquire the private property on Alkara Avenue for incorporation into the Recreation Reserve. It is suggested that this site would be ideal for a range of passive recreation infrastructure including park furniture (seating, tables etc), possibly a BBQ, playground, connecting path and landscaping. This site has also been identified as a preferred venue for the possible long-term development of an additional two netball courts.

Council is in the process of rezoning the recreation reserve land to Public Park and Recreation.



Football ground, clubrooms and tennis courts at the Lara Recreation Reserve

### *Elcho Park Recreation Reserve*

Elcho Park is a well developed equestrian facility. The reserve has a cross country course, sand arena and holding yards and associated clubroom facilities to support the two resident clubs, Corio & Moorabool Pony Club and the Westcoast Adult Riding Club.

As part of the Canterbury Road West growth area now known as the 'Grand Lakes' estate a series of pathways and linkages have been incorporated to connect the Reserve, the Grand Lakes estate, Bridge Street Reserve, Lara Lakes and Hovells Creek. Water pipelines and minor building works are scheduled for 2009 to improve the reserve and linkages.

### *Old Quarry Site in Kees Road*

The former quarry in Kees Road is owned by Council and is included in the Public Park and Recreation zone within the Planning Scheme. The site is currently undeveloped and under utilised, however it is a site with interesting potential due to its topography as a former quarry and its proximity to one of the most important intersections in the township. Council will need to examine its future use and 'development' options. Council have no works planned at this time however future development open space contributions could be used to improve this site as the need arises.

### *Open Space Linkages*

Establishment of an open space linkage along the watercourse leading from Serendip Sanctuary southward into the Hovells Creek open space spine will meet Council's policy of developing linear linkage routes throughout Lara to link residential areas to major open spaces. The watercourse is within public ownership however, the width of the reserve is narrow and may not be capable of being developed with a pathway to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians. Some land acquisition and or access rights may need to be negotiated with the adjoining landowners to achieve this outcome. Larger road reserves could also provide important opportunities to develop off road shared pathways to link communities with activity centres, schools, recreation facilities etc.

A path was constructed in 2007 along the Serendip Creek Reserve between Windermere Road and Pineview Court. A triangular piece of land adjacent to the creek needs to be acquired to improve access along the creek and allow the continuation of the shared pathway. Any future subdivision in the area should provide excellent permeability (shared pathways) linking residential areas to recreation nodes and linear linkages such as Serendip Creek Reserve.

### *Lara Recreation Facilities Study (2007)*

The Lara Recreation Facilities Study (2007) provides an assessment of the existing facilities in Lara and the facilities required to meet the communities current and future active recreation needs. As part of the Study three concept plans have been developed:

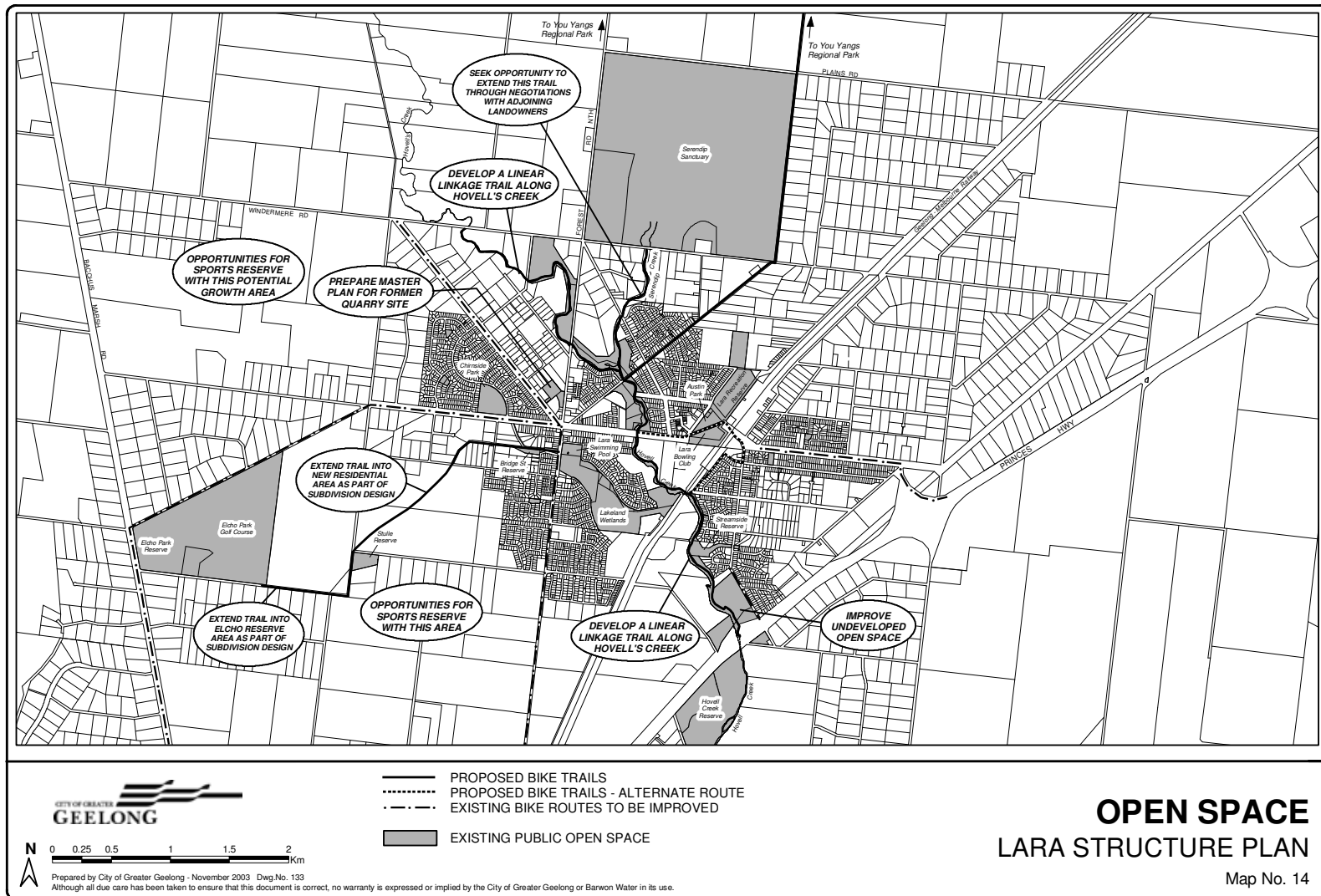
- Long-term development of the northern section of the Lara Recreation Reserve,
- Short-term development option for Lara Recreation Reserve (i.e. interim soccer arrangements), and
- High-level concept for the development of the Canterbury Road site for future soccer provision.

It recommends the following facilities be provided to cater for the current and projected population:

- new soccer pitches – including two synthetic surfaces,
- 2 new substantial pavilion buildings,
- 1 new multi-purpose oval,
- New baseball training lights and batting cage,
- Training lights for two soccer pitches and multi-purpose oval,
- Sealed car parking for around 629 cars, and
- Ancillary facilities

The Study identified a significant demand for the development of dedicated soccer facilities. The preferred site for providing such a facility is a site off Canterbury Road East within the Heales Road industrial estate buffer zone. This option is considered to provide long-term capacity and flexibility to cater for the communities growing soccer needs. However, until such a time as this site can be acquired and developed, soccer will need to continue to be accommodated at the Lara Recreation Reserve as an interim measure. Therefore development of the proposed Canterbury Road East site is considered a high priority. It is Council's preference for the facility to be developed at the northern end of the site, closer to the town centre and population catchment. Access to the site will be a key consideration.

# Map 14 – Open Space Network



## 5.4 Key Influences

- The increase in population means there is a need to provide additional community services to cater for existing and future needs.
- The opportunity to support the key recommendations of the Lara Community Infrastructure Analysis including upgrading or providing additional community services.
- The town is well serviced by educational and emergency facilities.
- The opportunity to provide an open space network that is well connected.
- The opportunity to support the key recommendations of the Lara Outdoor Recreation Facilities Study which identifies sports and recreational opportunities particularly for the Lara Recreation Reserve and a new Soccer Facility.
- Opportunities for tourism exist in the town centre however it is not a major contributor to the Lara local economy.

## **6.0 Physical Infrastructure and Transport**

The provision of infrastructure and hydraulic services in and around Lara is critical to determining the urban growth possibilities and constraints for the township.

### **6.1 Water Supply**

Lara was originally seweraged in 1983 with provision to connect up to 8,000 people from the town into the Geelong sewerage system. Following the Urban Growth Strategy in 1996 which identified Lara as one of the City's future urban growth locations, Barwon Water allocated sufficient capacity in the Geelong trunk sewer system to accommodate the development of Lara in accordance with the existing residentially zoned land of the township. This equated to a population of 12,000. Rural residential properties surrounding the residential zones are serviced by on-site septic disposal systems.

An increase in Lara's population beyond 12,000 people will necessitate additional sewerage capacity to be provided by Barwon Water. The 2007 Structure Plan and the 2009 update has determined the amount and direction of growth at Lara and this will enable Barwon Water to plan ahead to provide the additional reticulated sewerage services required.

Barwon Water is able to provide sewerage services to the areas identified for residential development in the Structure Plan. It is expected that the full development of these areas will necessitate an upgrade of the main sewerage pump station in Lara, Lara Pump Station No.1. This upgrade would involve a replacement of pumps and electrics, and a replacement of the pipeline from Darkes Road to Heales Road, following the existing alignment beside the railway line. Barwon Water will continue to monitor development rates over the next decade in order to confirm the timing of this project.

From 2003-2007, Barwon Water carried out a major investigation to develop a Sewerage Strategy for the Geelong region, including Lara. The investigation looked at how to manage increased sewage flows from northern Geelong and Lara associated with increased development. During these investigations, and in close partnership with major industrial customer Shell Geelong Refinery, a solution to provide wider benefits than a conventional sewerage system upgrade was identified – the Northern Water Plant. The Geelong Sewerage strategy recommended Barwon Water construct the new plant in the northern suburbs to avoid the need for a major upgrade of sewerage infrastructure through central Geelong.

The Northern Water Plant will treat trade waste from Shell Geelong Refinery and sewage from Geelong's northern suburbs including Lara to produce recycled water for the refinery and nearby public facilities. It will deliver a range of community-wide benefits, including a 5 per cent (2,000ML) reduction in Geelong drinking water use (equivalent to water used by 10,000 homes).



## 6.2 Sewer

The Lara water supply system operates by gravity from the Lovely Banks Service Basins in Anakie Road, Lovely Banks. These basins supply all the northern suburbs of Geelong as well as Lara.

There are four major feeder mains leaving the Lovely Banks Basins. The 1050mm diameter Northern Feeder Main Stage 1 (NFM1) conveys water from the Basins, generally following the route of the Geelong Bypass Road reservation to the Bacchus Marsh Road. Here it joins a 450-mm diameter pipeline known as the Lara Feeder Main. This main continues along Bacchus Marsh Road, Elcho Road and Patullos Road to the 5 Ways intersection in Lara where it feeds the reticulation system. The Lara system also supplies Little River, Avalon and the Barwon Prison.

The 750mm diameter NFM Stage 2 joins the NFM1 at Bacchus Marsh Road and continues around the Bypass Reservation and boosts supplies to the Heales Road area and also Lara through a 225 mm diameter pipe along Forest Road to the 5 Ways junction. As growth in Lara progresses, a new feeder main (the NFM3&4) will be required along Forest Road to the 5 Ways. Developers would be required to provide any smaller feeder mains and reticulation mains required to service future development.

During peak periods, areas to the north east of Lara, may have inadequate supplies by gravity. Barwon Water has constructed a small booster pump station to maintain adequate pressures during these times and has plans to upgrade its capacity in the near future.

## 6.3 Stormwater

An integral part of any urban area is the stormwater drainage infrastructure that manages the run-off generated by urban development. The main feature of stormwater management in Lara is the Hovells Creek Catchment, which itself can be broken down into a number of sub-catchments. All stormwater generated within Lara ultimately drains to Hovells Creek and into Corio Bay, via Limeburners Bay.

A significant feature of the Lara area is the lack of well developed surface drainage patterns; surface depressions exist with no defined watercourses. Some of these areas have been zoned for residential development with little or no consideration of drainage or flooding issues, in accordance with the practice of the time. The drainage/flooding problems that are now being experienced are compounded by the use of drainage design standards that required lower order 'minor system' drainage only. No 'major system' drainage was provided for runoff creating issues during higher order minor storms or major storm events. An example of such an area is east of railway and north of Archimedes Avenue.

There are a number of underground drainage networks within the Lara catchment including:

- A major trunk drain running from The Esperance across McClelland Road, down Gum Drive, across Archimedes Avenue and Stephenson Street then under Rennie Steet.
- An inceptor drain that runs from Clover Street to a major open drain along the east side of the railway line.
- The Elcho Main Drain Sub-Catchment with drainage systems discharging into open drains passing through relatively flat and poorly drained land that lacks well defined watercourses.
- Drainage pipes with diameters greater than 450mm and greater than 600mm.
- Levees particularly around Hovells Creek.

There are currently two gross pollutant traps within Lara. The first is an older style 'trash track' on the drains that feed the Lakelands waterways and the other is an in-line unit near the corner of Station Lake Road and Turner Street.

It is important to protect the Hovells Creek and Corio Bay (Limeburners Bay) waterways from pollutants and increased sediment loads, it is critical for new urban areas to be developed with best practice stormwater quality management including the formalising of kerbs and channels, the establishment of swale drains for stormwater treatment, the collection of runoff for irrigation purposes and the incorporation of water sensitive urban design principles.

## 6.4 Transport Infrastructure

### 6.4.1 Roads

Lara is located between the two major north and south bound arterial routes of Princes Freeway and Bacchus Marsh Road, and has reasonably direct access to these. East – westbound roads such as Windermere Road and Patullos-Station Lake Road provide the connections between the two. Forest Road South, a declared main road, is the main link between Lara and Geelong.

The Geelong Transport Strategy 2002 recognised the need to investigate traffic issues in the Lara area, as follows.

*“Concerns have been raised by residents relating to the number of heavy vehicles using inappropriate roads for access. These include residential streets.*

*The problem of Heales Road heavy vehicle traffic travelling through Lara to access Melbourne is acknowledged in this Strategy. However, the recent announcement by the State and Federal Governments to construct a link between Broderick Road and the Princes Freeway (as part of the Geelong Road upgrade) will reduce this concern. Despite the benefits of this development, heavy vehicle traffic from other industrial areas, and also those not destined for Melbourne, may continue to travel through the township.*

*Several key roads in Lara are load-limited and therefore are not structurally capable of carrying heavy vehicles. Heavy vehicle route selection therefore, will be limited unless these roads are upgraded.”*

The Strategy recommends that an investigation be undertaken to resolve heavy vehicle movement and road improvement issues in Lara to address amenity concerns and cater for increased travel demand. Council has responded to this action by preparing the Lara Transport Management Plan 2002.

This Plan has been prepared for Council to:

- Determine existing issues relating to the transportation of people and product.
- Determine the impacts of future residential and industrial development on the transport system.
- Identify improvement options and preferred solutions for the subject study area to enable Council to cost effectively manage the safe and orderly movement of people and product and reduce adverse impacts of travel on the community.

As noted earlier, the main transport issue that concerns Lara residents is the continuing use of Lara’s roads by heavy trucks, especially quarry trucks. An origin-destination survey as part of the Draft Lara Transport Management Plan confirmed that a large number of trucks, including quarry trucks and dogs, semi-trailers and some B-Doubles regularly travel through Lara for reason of inadequate access between the Heales Road Industrial Estate and the Princes Freeway and the directness of the route between the quarries in Sandy Creek Road and Geelong.

Truck traffic generated from within Lara itself is from deliveries to the Centreway Shopping Centre, the industries in Mill Road, from Lara Lime in Forest Road and the industries adjacent to Old Melbourne Road. Of these the most concern comes from the trucks servicing Lara Lime which pass through residential areas and have an amenity impact on local residents.

A number of options are proposed in the Lara Transport Management Plan to address the problems and to reduce the amount of truck traffic travelling through the township. The recommended option is to encourage use of the connection between Broderick Road and the Princes Highway that has been developed as part of the Princes Freeway upgrade. This is deemed to allow trucks to access both the Heales Road Industrial Estate and Bacchus Marsh Road without using Lara’s roads as a thoroughfare. This route would enable trucks to move from the Highway to Bacchus Marsh Road or Heales Roads without impacting on travel times. Improvements to this route would require extension of the link to Bacchus Marsh Road as part of the first stage of the Geelong Ring Road. This will provide safety

benefits and would give this route a distinctive advantage over travelling through Lara. The Geelong Ring Road has been constructed to the Hamilton Highway and Stage 3 is now underway.

Not all truck traffic can be removed as some trucks access properties in Lara and, therefore, are legitimate vehicle movements.

The implementation of the Lara UDF will require a realignment of the route over the railway line. The Station Lake Road – McClelland Avenue connection is one of the vital arterial roads linking the various sectors of Lara yet passes at grade over the railway line and through the town centre. Options for realignment have been considered as part of the Lara Transport Management Plan including a bridge over the railway line and a four-lane level crossing and have been given preliminary costings.

## **6.4.2 Public Transport**

### *Rail Services*

The Geelong to Melbourne railway line passes through Lara providing the township with one of its biggest assets and opportunities. Services operate to and from Melbourne and Geelong daily with commuter services stopping at the Lara station. This service is well patronised by commuters from Lara and the surrounding district.

In March 2007 the fast train service was introduced with new V-Locity railcars decreasing travel times and increasing in the number of services to Melbourne. Lara Train Station has also been upgraded to include improved and additional car parking (226 spaces to 352), covered walkway, improved lighting and new roadside signage.

This upgrade has improved the rail services and amenities in Lara and surrounding townships. Level and pedestrian crossings have been upgraded and boom barriers installed, resulting in increased safety for vehicular and pedestrian traffic crossing the railway line.

The railway line is part of the standard gauge railway network and is also used for freight transport including:

- Cement between Waurin Ponds and Arden Street, North Melbourne.
- Timber logs transported between Bairnsdale and Corio Quay.
- Quarry trains from Kilmore to North Shore; wheat from north and north east Victoria (not as frequent with the drought but previously was daily in season).
- Oil from Geelong to Shepparton and possibly Wodonga; and
- The Warrnambool freight train between Warrnambool and Melbourne.

### *Bus Services*

Lara has an hourly service between Lara and Geelong on weekdays with fewer services on the weekend. The service has a number of stops in Lara before it leaves for Geelong. It takes approximately 55 minutes to travel by bus from Lara to the Central Activities Area (CAA) of Geelong. There are twenty-four stops located within Lara and the bus travels via Plantation Road, Bacchus Marsh Road, and Corio Village to Geelong's CAA.

To address this shortfall, Council recommends that Lara have two bus systems. The first should be a bus route travelling directly between the Lara Railway Station, The Centreway Shopping Centre and Corio Village Shopping Centre, and will involve an efficient bus interchange at the station. Passengers journeying to central Geelong will interchange at Corio Village. This service would then be supplemented by one or two demand responsive mini-buses that pick passengers up at or close to their home. This proposal would also service the rural residential areas of Lara and connect to the Lara Railway Station and The Centreway Shopping Centre, where interchanges with other services (bus and rail) can be made.

School bus services around Lara Secondary College and Lara Primary School need to be formalised to ensure a safe and efficient service. The Department of Transport (DoT), and the City of Greater Geelong's (COGG) Traffic Engineering Branch, Lara Secondary College, Lara Primary School and the school bus operators are in discussions to find a suitable location for a school bus interchange to service the education precinct. The Lara Urban Design Framework provides some commentary on the issue.

“DoT advise that there are “no options for the buses on school land due to both schools effectively being land locked, with very little to no street frontages. The bus interchange will have to be external to the school boundaries (as it is now)”.

DoT note that the Draft Report suggested Council consider acquiring the remaining private property on Alkara Avenue to support further expansion of the recreation reserve. DoT have indicated that it is their preference to incorporate the required bus interchange within this property should it be acquired. Specific extracts from the DoT submissions are included below:

*“DoT’s preference is for the private parcel of land on Alkara Ave identified as item 10 on the long term plan to be purchased by COGG and used to build a school bus interchange. This piece of land would provide the perfect location for a purpose built bus interchange with buses accessing from Alkara Ave westbound, and being able to loop into the interchange and exit eastbound on Alkara Ave. This would remove all bus activity from the Alkara Ave/Waverley Rd roundabout and be well clear of parent parking and the school crossing.*

*DoT acknowledges that this is a medium term solution but is prepared to wait for the purchase of the land. DoT would consider funding or part funding the bus interchange construction in the form of a grant to the COGG at the time of the land purchase. Therefore, it is recommended that the Lara Recreation Reserve Master Plan include the provision for the purchase of the private property identified in 3.1.8 page 11 of the draft plan, with it earmarked for a suitable school bus interchange including entrance and exit for buses from the east of Alkara Ave, and also sufficient space for shelters and student waiting area. An area for 4-5 buses will be required.”*

### **6.4.3 Parking**

The Lara Town Centre Urban Design Framework 2006 identifies a community view that there is insufficient parking in the town centre area. However, the report states existing parking appears adequate for most foreseeable peak demands, although shoppers may not find a parking space at the front door of shops they wish to visit.

The Lara Town Centre area currently contains around 5,200 square metres of retail and commercial floor space and there are approximately 243 parking spaces including private off-street spaces. This is a provision rate of 4.6 spaces per 100 square metres of floor area. Some of the spaces are considered less than convenient for shoppers but the overall provision rate is higher than expected demands for an economically viable town centre.

The car parks in the town centre locality are characterised as being poorly maintained with low amenity value (poor landscaping, lack of shade trees etc). Other areas of parking are undefined, with poor amenity.

As part of the UDF master plan, additional parking areas associated with retail development are identified in the town centre. Estimated peak parking demands generated at the expanded Lara Town Centre are:

**Table 8 - Projected Parking Demand**

Use	Parking Rate	Number of Spaces
Supermarket	3,800m <sup>2</sup> @ 3.5 spaces/100m <sup>2</sup>	133
Commercial and Community Space	3,500m <sup>2</sup> @ 4.5 spaces/100m <sup>2</sup>	158
Specialty shops	2,200m <sup>2</sup> @ 3.5 spaces/100m <sup>2</sup>	77
Showroom	2,500m <sup>2</sup> @ 2.0 spaces/100m <sup>2</sup>	50
Mini-Major	1,400m <sup>2</sup> @ 3.5 spaces/100m <sup>2</sup>	49
<b>TOTAL PEAK DEMAND</b>		<b>467</b>

Staff requirements are likely to comprise around 160 of these spaces, and customer demands around 310 spaces.

## **6.4.4 Pedestrian and Bicycle Network**

### *Bicycle Network*

On a regional level Geelong's Transport Strategy provides a broad range of strategic directions such as:

- Expand, improve and regularly maintain the bicycle network and facilities;
- Improve road safety for cyclists;
- Plan and coordinate bicycle improvement and integration with other modes of transport; and
- Increase public awareness of cycling as a legitimate, safe, healthy and environmentally friendly form of transport.

In supplementing this document, the City of Greater Geelong Cycle Strategy (2007) has been developed to provide Council with guidance on expanding Geelong's regional on and off road cycle network, improving bicycle facilities, enhancing cyclist education and delivering promotions that encourage people to cycle as a means of transport, recreation and sport. A number of works are recommended for Lara including:

#### Connecting the Network – Off Road

Connecting the Bay Trail through Rippleside and North Geelong would create a continuous connection to Lara. This will require negotiation with land owners and the Ford Motor Company. Connecting the Tom McKean Linear Trail and the Cowies Creek Trail to the Bay Trail is desirable.

#### Connecting the Network – On Road

Installation of bicycle lanes along Melbourne Road at the completion of the Geelong Bypass. This could be a significant spine for cyclists and attract large numbers of commuter cyclists from North Geelong, Norlane, Corio and Lara.

#### Bicycle Works Program

- Create a shared path link between the on-road bicycle lanes on the Princess Highway and the off-road Hovells Creek Trail – priority C
- Connect the off road bicycle paths along Kees road to connect to Primary School and Lara township via a shared path – priority D
- Seal shoulders and include bicycle lanes and signage and install bicycle lanes on Forest Road South from Lara to Melbourne Road - priority D

#### Long Term Proposals

- Connect the cycle path along Hovells Creek from the Hovells Creek reserve to Flinders Ave (via Serendip Sanctuary) with a shared path plus signage – high priority
- Improve shoulders by sealing along Elcho, Patullos and Heales Roads to create connections from North Geelong to Lara - medium priority
- Install an off road bicycle connection shared path along Flinders Road to the You Yangs – low priority

Like many of the City's townships, Lara has some on and off road bicycle routes for the recreation and travel needs of the population. The Lara Transport Management Plan recommends that shoulders along the on-road routes of Forest Road North, Old Melbourne Road, McClelland Avenue and Windermere Road be sealed to provide safer, more useable infrastructure for cyclists.

As an urgent project, it is recommended that the proposed bicycle path from Station Lake Road to the Hovells Creek underpass of the Princes Freeway be completed to connect the existing Hovells Creek path south of the freeway. This will provide a satisfactory route to Geelong for cyclists and importantly, will connect Lara into Geelong's bicycle path network and provide a safe and pleasant route to Geelong for both commuter and recreational cyclists.

Trail networks within the City are a key component of maximising access to, and integration of, the overall open space network. Any future subdivision and growth areas will be required to make provision for trail networks as part of the open space and for these to be linked in with the existing bicycle system.

### *Pedestrian Network*

On a regional level Geelong's Transport Strategy provides a broad range of strategic directions which include:

- Create a highly connected and integrated pedestrian network.
- Improve pedestrian safety and amenity.
- Promote walking as a legitimate, safe, healthy, economically advantageous and environmentally friendly form of transport.

Key directions identified within the Study include:

- Create a highly connected and integrated pedestrian network.
- Improve pedestrian safety and amenity.
- Promote walking as a legitimate, safe, healthy, economically advantageous and environmentally friendly form of transport.

Most residential streets in Lara do not have footpaths and the rural residential areas have no footpaths. The Lara Transport Management Plan 2003 recommends that a program of footpath reinstatement on all non cul-de-sac roads be implemented as an ongoing long-term program. Further, all collector and higher order roads should have footpaths constructed on both sides of the roads as a priority.

There are generally adequate pedestrian linkages between the various activity centres within Lara such as the schools, shops and railway station. Adding to this network with on-street and off-street footpaths and walking tracks is recommended by the Transport Management Plan and supported by this Structure Plan. The open space spines play an important role in the pedestrian network for both leisure and general movement of the community.



Recently completed shared path along Serendip Creek which will eventually connect the town centre to the You Yangs.

The Lara Structure Plan Urban Design Framework identifies a number of pedestrian accessibility issues in the town centre including:

- Heavy vehicle movements
- Walk distances across Waverley Road and Station Lake Road are generally longer than desirable, and footpaths are absent or poor in many parts of the town centre area.
- There are several pedestrian / vehicular conflict points including the railway crossing, the 'entrance' to The Centreway and parking areas.
- General access to the shopping centre is difficult and undefined and there is poor signage to the town itself.
- Pedestrian paths are poorly defined and have poor links. There are poor pedestrian and vehicular links between shops / carparks / transport (rail) / sports precinct / bowls club etc.
- The lack of railway crossings concentrates traffic movement to the Walkers Road crossing.
- The service station entrance in combination with the higher traffic volumes on the western side of the railway line make the western roundabout the worst location for traffic queuing and delays in the Lara Town Centre area.

- Pedestrian accessibility and amenity around the town centre area are reduced because of poor or absent footpaths and the absence of active street frontages to most of the town centre area other than The Centreway.
- The railway line, Lakeland Wetlands and Hovell Creek all block the movement network and thus reduce pedestrian safety, amenity and connectivity. Consequently most people appear to be attending the town centre in cars.
- The Lara railway station is surrounded by open parking and low activity land uses, creating a poor pedestrian environment.

#### **6.4.6 Identified Improvements to Transport & Movement Network**

A number of opportunities have been identified to improve the transport and movement network around Lara including the town centre:

- Designate appropriate truck routes.
- Upgrade the train station precinct to include better pedestrian access including an overpass, directional signage, landscaping.
- Create a transport interchange at the train station catering to trains, buses, bikes, pedestrians, taxis and private cars.
- Improve bus services through increased services and strategic stop locations as well as more direct services to key destinations.
- Create better pedestrian links to and from key locations in the township.
- Promote pedestrian and bicycle connections in and around the town by providing better / new pathways and footpaths.
- Provide a school bus interchange in the education precinct with a preference for the Alkara Avenue site (currently privately owned) or as part of rezoning land north of the school sites.
- Investigate opportunities for transport from Lara to Avalon Airport.

### **6.6 Key Influences**

- The drainage infrastructure is under increasing pressure and may require upgrades.
- Opportunity to include best practice water sensitive urban design principles into drainage networks to protect Hovells Creek and Corio Bay (Limeburners Bay).
- Barwon Water is satisfied that the capacity of the water and sewerage systems is, or will be capable of accommodating future growth.
- Opportunity to improve the limited pedestrian and bicycle linkages throughout the township and within the open space areas.
- The compact size of the township, location of commercial and community facilities and the safety of the street network provide and excellent opportunity for more sustainable, non-vehicle reliance travel.
- Opportunity to provide improved and more frequent public transport options and create a transport interchange at the train station and a school bus interchange near the education precinct.
- The town centre is currently well serviced by parking although the layout and amenity could be improved.
- The need to designate appropriate trucks routes through the town.

## **7.0 Commercial Growth, Residential Lot Supply and Further Development**

### **7.1 Commercial Growth**

#### **Lara Urban Design Framework**

In 2007 the Lara Town Centre Urban Design Framework prepared by David Lock Associates was adopted by Council. This Framework looks at how to grow the town centre appropriately, taking into account the changing needs and aspirations of the Lara Community, traders and stakeholders.

The vision is for the town centre to be the primary activity centre for the Lara region, a multifunctional, vibrant and strong centre with positive pedestrian spaces that are the focus for trade of goods, provision of services and positive social interaction. A number of aims and strategies have been developed to enhance the town centre.

The main retail/commercial centre of Lara is located in and around The Centreway. The existing Lara Town Centre contains around 3,800sqm of retail floor space, including a Safeway supermarket of approximately 1,400sqm. Other non-retail commercial functions in the Town Centre comprise around 1,400sqm of floor space, including Australia Post, medical services, three banks and other professional services. This precinct is zoned Business 1 Zone.

Located just outside the town centre is Six Ways, a small strip shopping centre comprising 800sqm floor space, the main components of which is take away food, but there is also a newsagent, milk bar and some medical facilities (physiotherapy). The centre is almost fully tenanted and there is no further expansion recommended.

In the hierarchy of retail centres, the Lara town centre performs the role of a small community centre. It is at a disadvantage, in that it has significant competition in close proximity. Corio Village, 8km south of Lara's town centre has 25,000sqm of retail, and 4,000sqm of non-retail floor space, making it one of the largest shopping centres in the region. In addition, Geelong Central Activities Area also offers major retail facilities and two major shopping centres.

Given the lack of retail floor space in the Lara Town Centre and the balance of the township (Six Ways and Station), there is substantial 'escape' spending from the trade area. This means that residents travel outside Lara for many basic retail needs such as clothing and many food and grocery items. Under the UDF escape spending from the Lara trade area is estimated at around 75% of spending by trade area residents on retail. Although there will always be escape spending from an area such as Lara, this is an extremely high level relative to other similar small towns.

The Safeway supermarket is significantly smaller or 'limited in range' compared to present day 'full line' stores that stock a full range of items. This reduces the ability of the town centre to serve the basic weekly grocery requirements. If shoppers are looking for choice in goods, they are forced to shop elsewhere. This does not just have an effect on retail, but other services as it is likely that if the residents shop elsewhere such as Corio Village, they would use other facilities there, resulting in further escape spending. This represents a lost opportunity to retain spending and employment in Lara. In order to maintain and increase its retail competitiveness and ensure a reduction in escape expenditure, the town centre must offer more retail facilities and services. In particular, it must contain the key attractions which tend to entice people to shopping areas. These typically include supermarkets, larger stores, banks and a diverse range of shops.



The table below sets out the current floor areas within the town centre and the proposed spaces required in the town centre in order to enhance the centres competitiveness and reduce escape expenditure.

**Table 9 – Floor Space Requirements**

Use	Current Floor Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Proposed Total Floor Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Floor Space Increase (m <sup>2</sup> )
Specialty Shops	2,400	3,800	1,400
Supermarket	1,400	3,500	2,100
Non-retail	1,400	2,200	2,200
Showroom	0	2,500	2,500
Mini Major	0	1,400	1,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,200</b>	<b>13,400</b>	<b>8,200</b>

Other issues identified in the Framework as requiring attention included:

- The need for the centre to physically grow and expand the retail offered to cater for current and future needs in its current position.
- The expected population increase for Lara. The town centre currently serves a large area estimated at 13,790 people, which consists of people from the surrounding areas possibly including Anakie, Little River and Avalon. The trade area population and visitors is growing constantly, and is expected to grow by 15% to 15,890 by 2012.
- A need for better car parking within the centre
- The lack of a permanent library
- Lara doesn't have a major focus or 'heart' like a town square.
- Truck traffic through the centre, which was raised as a major concern by residents and businesses in the area.

#### **Retail Growth Potential in the Lara Town Centre - Economic and Retail Analysis**

A retail issues paper 'Lara Structure Plan – Retail Development Issues, March 2009' has been prepared by economist Tim Nott. This paper looks at the current retail situation, current and future retail needs in Lara and options for meeting these needs.

The analysis reveals an estimated 79% of spending by residents in the Lara trade area occurs outside the township. A neighbourhood centre such as Lara should typically cater for around 50% of food and grocery needs but the current retail supply in Lara means the supply is only around 31%.

The following extracts are from the issues paper:

*The following table provides an estimate developed for this report of the potential growth in retail floorspace in the Lara trade area over the period to 2031.*

**Table 9 - Forecast growth in retail floor space potential for the Lara trade area, 2008 to 2031**

Retail type	2008 to	2011 to	2008 to	2021 to 2031
	2011	2021	2021	2031
	sq m	sq m	sq m	sq m
Food and groceries	2,100	1,200	3,300	500
Household goods	700	300	1,000	100
Other goods	600	300	900	200
Food service	700	400	1,100	200
Retail services	300	200	500	300
<b>Total retail spending</b>	<b>4,400</b>	<b>2,400</b>	<b>6,800</b>	<b>1,300</b>

Source: consultant estimates

The assumptions behind this estimate of floorspace potential include:

- Retailers become continuously more efficient and retail sales per sq m rise by 0.5% per year
- New retail space is attractive enough to reduce escape spending by trade area residents to 65% of their overall retail spending (from 79% currently).
- Spending by visitors continues to form the same proportion of overall sales as currently
- Retail competition from centres outside the trade area remains steady

This forecast suggests that by 2021, the Lara trade area could support a further 6,800 sq m of retail floorspace, including 3,300 sq m of food and grocery space. Floorspace potential continues to grow after 2021 because the spending per capita increases even though the population is forecast to decline slightly. This forecast allows for the provision of a new full-line supermarket in the trade area over the next 13 years. If the existing supermarket were to expand, there is adequate demand to support its growth to a full-line supermarket immediately.

The table below provides an estimate of land area required for activity centre functions in Lara over the period to 2021. The calculations assume:

- Lara will be required to accommodate 6,800 sq m of additional retail space and 3,700 sq m of non-retail commercial space over the period to 2021
- all development is single storey
- car-parking provision is 4.6 spaces per 100 sq m of retail space and 3.6 spaces per 100 sq m of other space broadly as detailed in the Lara town centre UDF

**Table 10 - Notional demand for additional land providing activity centre functions, 2008 to 2021**

2008 to 2021	Retail		Total
	activity	Other activity	activity
Total demand (sq m)	6,800	3,700	10,500
Car-parking requirement (spaces per 100 sq m)	4.6	3.6	4
Number of parking spaces required	313	133	446
Land required for car-parking (@30sq m per space)	9,400	4,000	13,400
Land required for landscaping and circulation (10% of total)	1,800	900	2,700
Total demand for land (sq m)	18,000	8,600	26,600

Source: consultant estimates; figures rounded

This calculation provides an estimate that 2.7 ha of land will be required for activity centre functions in Lara over the period to 2021.

This forecast may be lower if some development can be double storey and/or if the car-parking requirement is reduced.

The proposed provision of additional space in the UDF broadly accords with the retail demand forecast developed for this report (6,800 sq m). The provision of non-retail space in the town centre in the UDF appears to be a little lower than the forecast in this report. However, the UDF also allows for the development of non-retail space in the wider town centre precinct such as the emergency services hub on Mill Road.

In general, the town centre expansion proposed in the UDF can accommodate most of the forecast for additional land requirements developed for this report, particularly if some of the non-retail space can be provided above new or existing shops.

Some activities such as wholesaling or large format sales could be readily accommodated in the Station precinct, between Clover Street and Hicks Street, where there is some vacant or under-utilised land. Other large format commercial or community uses could be accommodated in other locations on the fringe of the town centre, including McLelland Avenue and Mill Road and potentially in the railway reserve.

The Patullos Road local activity centre may have some room for minor additions but is generally fully developed.

In addition, there may be potential to develop a further local activity centre to service the needs of residents who live some distance from the existing centres. This could be in the western sector of the township which is nominated in the structure plan as a growth area.

The following table provides a notional allocation of the demand for space between various activity centres in Lara between 2008 and 2021.

**Table 11 - Notional allocation of floorspace to activity precincts in Lara, 2008 to 2021**

Activity precinct	Floorspace	
	sq m	% of total
Lara town centre - Austin Park	8,200	78%
Other town centre precinct	500	5%
Station precinct	1,000	10%
Patullos Road	200	2%
New local activity centre	600	6%
Total	10,500	100%

Source: consultant estimates

The forecast demand for space in Lara could be accommodated within the existing centres and in a small local centre.

Market demand in Lara over the period to 2021 is likely to support the provision of a full line supermarket as well as substantial non-food stores, in addition to the existing shops in the area. Further major retail development in Lara should take place at the existing town centre in order to maintain a sustainable urban form, to safeguard existing investments both public and private, and to bring forward the provision of higher order retail functions. This is the intent of the Lara Town Centre Urban Design Framework, which is Council's current policy framework for future development in the area.

An improved food and grocery service is currently the most pressing requirement for local residents. Whilst the expansion of the existing supermarket, if technically feasible, may provide a short term solution to this issue, it may make the long-term development of the town centre, as recommended in the UDF, more commercially difficult. This is a tactical development issue for the Council.

The proposal for a new supermarket-based activity centre would require a substantial time to progress; it may not be successful in gaining approval; and it would almost certainly cripple the existing town centre and delay the provision of higher order retail activities. For these reasons it would be better to abandon the idea and put more resources into progressing the development envisaged in the UDF.

Market demand would be sufficient to support a small local activity centre in addition to the expansion of the town centre proposed in the UDF. This is best located in the growth area on the western fringe of the township to provide a local retail service for residents who will be some distance from the existing activity centres.

## Conclusions

*This analysis of retail and activity centre development in Lara provides the following findings:*

- 1. The Lara town centre serves the Lara township and rural areas to the north and east of the town. The current population of this trade area is approximately 13,900 and has been growing at around 2.0% per year over the period 2001 to 2008.*
- 2. The Lara trade area contains around 5,100 sq m of retail floorspace in three activity centres – the Lara town centre, a nearby activity precinct around the railway station, and a local centre around the intersection of Patullos Road and Forest Road. The Lara town centre is the largest of these, with around 4,000 sq m of retail floorspace. The town centre is the equivalent of a neighbourhood centre. Its key function is to provide food and groceries and other convenience items to the trade area. To this end, the town centre has a supermarket of 1,450 sq m, which is rather too small to provide a full range of food and groceries.*
- 3. Total retail sales in the trade area were approximately \$33 million in 2008, 81% of which were made in the town centre.*
- 4. Resident spending on retail goods and services is estimated at \$149 million in 2008. Retail escape spending, after accounting for spending by visitors, is estimated at \$118 million, or 79% overall. This includes \$46 million in food and grocery spending, or 69% of all spending in this category, which is relatively high. A neighbourhood centre would typically capture 30% to 40% of the retail spending of its trade area, including perhaps 50% of its spending on food and groceries.*
- 5. The future retail development potential in Lara depends on population growth and growth in retail spending per person as well as investment to capture the existing shortfall in retail provision.*
- 6. For this report, population is forecast to grow at an average of 1.8% per year over the period to 2021, with growth tailing off thereafter. This forecast is based loosely on the recent forecast by id consulting prepared for Council. By 2021, the population of the trade area is forecast to be 17,500, a growth of 3,600 from 2008.*
- 7. Growth in retail spending per person is forecast to be 1% per year, following long term trends.*
- 8. As a result of these factors, the retail spending of trade area residents is forecast to grow by \$67 million per year by 2021 compared with 2008.*
- 9. If the Lara trade area can capture a more normal 35% share of resident spending, and assuming that the share of sales contributed by visitors remains the same, then Lara could support a further 6,800 sq m of retail floorspace by 2021. Of this, 3,300 sq m would be in food and grocery retailing. This would be sufficient to allow development of a full line supermarket in Lara in addition to the existing supermarket. There is market demand for a full-line supermarket by 2011 if the existing supermarket were to expand, rather than construction of a new additional facility.*
- 10. Presently, around 35% of activity floorspace in the Lara town centre is taken by non-retail activities. This is within the normal parameters for similar activity centres elsewhere in Victoria. For the purposes of this report, it is assumed that non-retail activity will continue to take 35% of all floorspace. As a result, the growth in non-retail floorspace in Lara's activity centres is forecast to be 3,700 sq m by 2021.*
- 11. By 2021, Lara's activity centres are forecast to require an additional 10,500 sq m of commercial floorspace. This level of floorspace gives rise to a land requirement of approximately 2.7 ha to accommodate commercial functions in Lara's activity centres by 2021.*
- 12. This forecast broadly accords with the assessment in the Lara Town Centre Urban design Framework (UDF), which provides for an additional 8,200 sq m of space in the town centre proper (in Austin Park) and further activity space in the wider town centre precinct. Table 3 illustrates how the forecast space identified in this report could be allocated in accordance with the UDF. This allocation allows for the development of a new local activity centre that would be established to service the growing areas to the west of town.*

13. *The UDF proposes an extension of the Lara town centre onto adjacent parkland (Austin Park) to accommodate a new full-line supermarket and a variety of specialty shops and showrooms. The UDF suggests that the building housing the existing supermarket could be used to accommodate a mini-major or a small discount department store (such as a Country Target). However, the acquisition of Austin Park for commercial development is likely to take some time to organise (several years according to Council), and in the meantime, Lara residents have a less than optimal retail service.*
14. *The existing supermarket operator in the town centre is keen to expand. The owner of the site has proposed a plan to expand the supermarket to 3,500 sq m, which would provide a full-line service. This plan would require development on the adjacent roadway and realignment of the road in order to provide sufficient space for car-parking. This proposal is supportable by market demand. However, there is no market support for a second full-line supermarket and it would therefore remove a major attraction for any developer to undertake the Austin Park redevelopment proposed by the UDF. This could stymie expansion of the town centre for the long term.*
15. *A further option put forward by some stakeholders is for the development of a new supermarket-based centre in a different location in Lara. Such a centre could provide full-line supermarket facilities and a range of specialty shops in a neighbourhood activity centre. In market demand terms, such a development would be likely to remove the need for further development in the town centre. Even if this proposal were able to progress through the required planning scheme amendment process rapidly, and even if it were recommended for approval by a Panel, it would still take some years to come to fruition. The results of a new neighbourhood centre would be to cripple further development of the town centre and to delay investment in higher order retail facilities beyond the larger supermarket.*
16. *There are good reasons why further significant retail development should take place at the Lara town centre in preference to any other centre serving the trade area:*
  - *Reduction in trips for residents and more sustainable development outcomes*
  - *Improved use of infrastructure and existing assets, both public and private*
  - *Increased customer traffic at businesses*
  - *Greater likelihood of investment in higher order retail activities*
  - *Enhanced confidence that assets will retain their value*
  - *The existing centre remains central to the township*

*For these reasons the idea of the alternative supermarket-centre should be abandoned and the effort channelled into making the existing town centre work. Whether or not a full-line supermarket should be provided on the site of the existing supermarket or on Austin Park is a tactical development issue for Council.*

### Recommendations

The key recommendation from the Retail Development Issues Paper (2009) states:

*'Market demand in Lara over the period to 2021 is likely to support the provision of a full line supermarket as well as substantial non-food stores, in addition to the existing shops in the area. Further major retail development in Lara should take place at the existing town centre in order to maintain a sustainable urban form, to safeguard existing investments both public and private, and to bring forward the provision of higher order retail functions. This is the intent of the Lara Town Centre Urban Design Framework, which is Council's current policy framework for future development in the area.*

*An improved food and grocery service is currently the most pressing requirement for local residents. Whilst the expansion of the existing supermarket, if technically feasible, may provide a short term solution to this issue, it may make the long-term development of the town centre, as recommended in the UDF, more commercially difficult. This is a tactical development issue for the Council.*

*The proposal for a new supermarket-based activity centre would require a substantial time to progress; it may not be successful in gaining approval; and it would almost certainly cripple the existing town centre and delay the provision of higher order retail activities. For these reasons it would be better to abandon the idea and put more resources into progressing the development envisaged in the UDF.*

*Market demand would be sufficient to support a small local activity centre in addition to the expansion of the town centre proposed in the UDF. This is best located in the growth area on the western fringe of the township to provide a local retail service for residents who will be some distance from the existing activity centres.'*

### **7.1.1 Tourism**

Lara is not known as a tourist destination but is located in close proximity to Avalon Airport, the Brisbane Ranges, You Yangs and Geelong. The Lara Urban Design Framework identifies opportunities to strengthen tourism by providing better transport, a visitor information centre, accommodation and tourist retail outlets.

### **7.1.2 Industrial and Manufacturing Services**

The Heales Road Industrial Estate is one of Geelong's major industrial estates and is located to the south of Lara. It has been established as an area suitable for larger industries. It is the only greenfields estate in the northern sector of Geelong designed to attract major industries requiring buffer distances to residential areas. The Estate comprises over 400 hectares of serviced land to meet the long-term requirements of major manufacturing in the City. It is a location for high quality value adding manufacturing operations that require large plants and has attracted world class manufacturing operations. The Estate has convenient and direct access to Melbourne and Geelong by road and rail, and potential access to domestic and overseas markets through Geelong Port and Avalon Airport. Council owns about 110 hectares of land in the Estate.

Council is committed to maintaining the rural buffer between the Heales Road Industrial Estate and urban Lara to safeguard the future of the estate for its optimal development potential.

There are several other industries interspersed throughout and on the periphery of Lara:

- Lara Lime company in Forest Road North is a crushing plant for agricultural lime.
- Southern Cross Grains on Mill Road.
- HiFert Fertilisers on Old Melbourne Road.
- Josies Transport also on Old Melbourne Road.
- Elcho Garden Supplies at the corner Bacchus Marsh and Elcho Roads.
- Modern Olives Nursery in Old Melbourne Road.
- Riordan Grain Services in Old Melbourne Road.
- Boomaroo Nursery in St Andrews Drive.

The Mill Road and Old Melbourne Road sites are included in the Industrial 1 and Industrial 3 Zones respectively.

The Hicks Street and McClelland Avenue service business area accommodates services such as vehicle repairs, plumbing supplies and video hire. Anecdotal advice suggests that this needs to be supplemented with additional supply to meet the community need.

Land in Mill Road adjoining the Lara Railway Station has received permission to be developed with a small number of industrial sheds although these are yet to materialise on the ground.

## 7.2 Residential Lot Supply

### 7.2.1 Trends in Residential Development

Lara has developed significantly since the 1985 Structure Plan was prepared. The residential growth recommendations of that Plan have been realised with the opportunities for further expansion are now inhibited by physical constraints such as flooding and service provision and the absence of strategic direction.

The older and established parts of Lara generally have larger than average patterns of building spacing, low scale dwellings and lack of front fencing creating an open and spacious feel to the streetscapes and where substantial vegetation can be accommodated.

The newer residential areas of Lara including the Lara Lake Estate and the Country Garden Estate have represented a 'suburban style' of residential estate in Lara with smaller lots sizes, a prevalence of cul de sacs, open spaces and specialised streetscape treatments.

In 2007 an amendment was approved to rezone an 85 hectare (approximately) parcel of land from Rural/Farming and Low Density Residential to Residential 1 and Urban Floodway to facilitate urban development. The estate is known as Grand Lakes and once completed will provide just under 800 lots.



Newer residential area - Lara Lakes Estate and wetlands

### 7.2.2 Residential Lot Supply

In 1995 the Residential Lot Supply Project estimated the lot supply for Lara between 934 and 1217 lots (representing a 10 to 15 lots per hectare density). In May 2003 there were 202 individual allotments and 6.72 hectares of vacant residentially zoned land in Lara (residentially zoned land encumbered by flooding overlays has not been included in these figures).

A lot supply analysis for Lara was completed in 2006 and this has been updated to include statistics from the last two years. A number of factors were considered in calculating the future lot supply, including the number of vacant lots and potential yield of lots from unsubdivided land. However, it does not consider the requirements of public open space, drainage reserves, roads etc which would reduce the actual yield from these areas.

To determine lot supply an understanding of the dwelling approvals in required. The figures for Lara are shown in table 12 below.

**Table 12 – Dwelling Approvals**

Year	Approvals	Year	Approvals	Year	Approvals
1986/87	84	1994/95	51	2002/03	103
1987/88	66	1995/96	57	2003/04	102
1988/89	95	1996/97	108	2004/05	71
1989/90	88	1997/98	161	2005/06	78
1990/91	57	1998/99	230	2006/07	54
1991/92	88	1999/00	182	2007/08	61
1992/93	105	2000/01	124	2008*	47
1993/94	73	2001/02	185		

\*up to November 2008

Council's urban growth policies promote a target of 15 dwellings per hectare in new residential growth areas, the lot yield in Lara is around the 10-12 lots per hectare for recent residential subdivisions of broad hectare land. Figures have been provided for each of these densities.

**Table 13 – Lot Supply Analysis**

Lot Type	Lots	Hectares
Serviced vacant residential lots	174	-
Serviced vacant low density lots	12	-
Serviced vacant rural living lots	67	-
<b>Total zoned lots</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>-</b>
Undeveloped broad hectare land (unsubdivided residential land)		98
Potential lots from broad hectare land (10 per hectare)	980	-
Potential lots from broad hectare land (12 per hectare)	1,176	-
Potential lots from broad hectare land (15 per hectare)	1,470	-
<b>Total capacity (zoned lots plus broad hectare lots)</b>		<b>-</b>
At a 10 lots per hectare yield	1,233	-
At a 12 lots per hectare yield	1,429	-
At a 15 lots per hectare yield	1,723	-

(note figures are rounded)

Based on this capacity, an average 98 building approvals per annum (1984 to 2007) and a 100% building commencement, the number of years lot supply is:

**Table 14 – Years of Lot Supply**

Lot Yield	Years Supply
At 10 lots per hectare	12.5
At 12 lots per hectare	14.5
At 15 lots per hectare	17.5

(note figures are rounded)



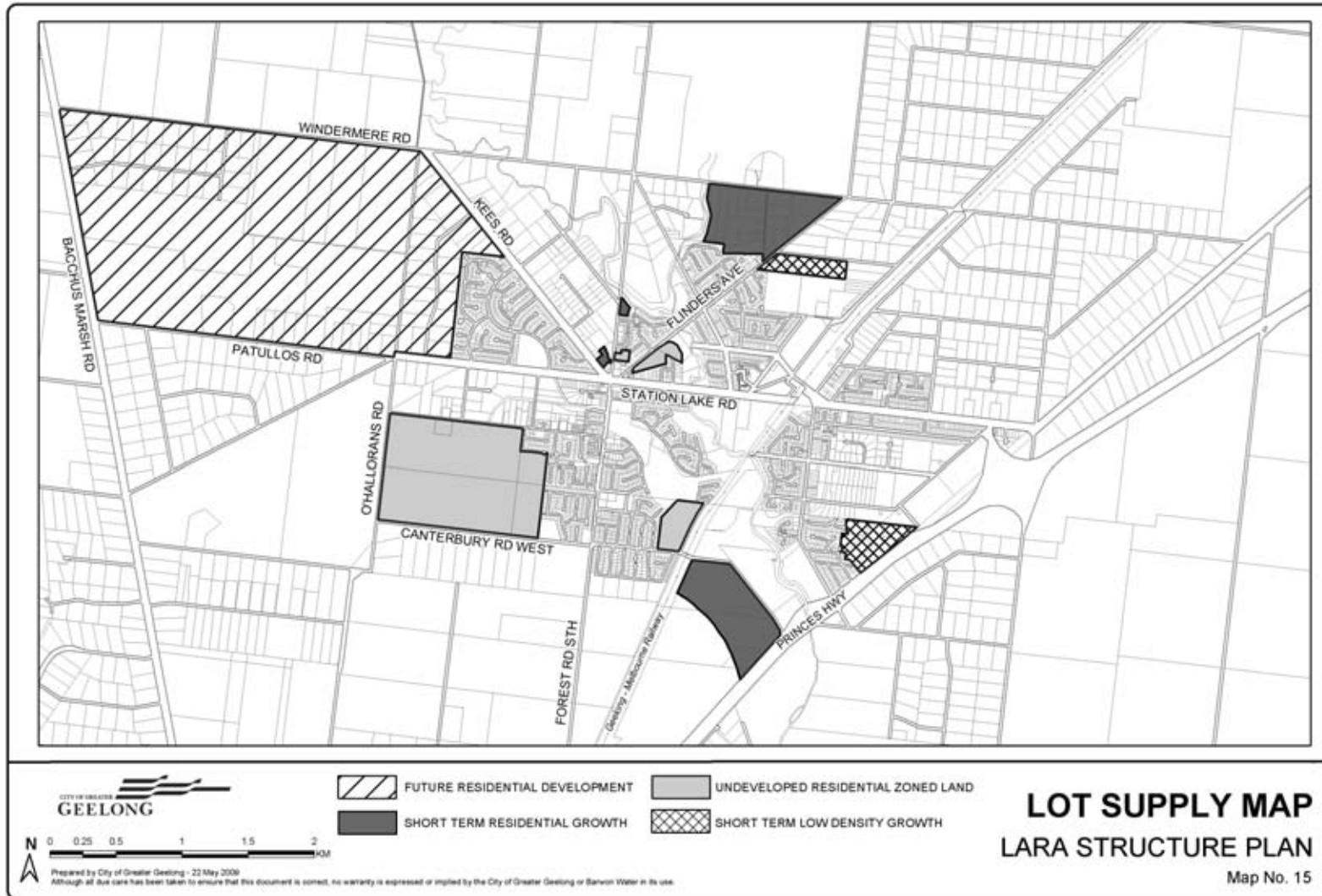
As well as the available land currently zoned for residential development the existing Structure Plan also identifies short and long term growth areas. The lot yields and year supply of these growth areas is set out in the table below:

**Table 15 – Growth Opportunities and Lot Supply**

Identified conventional short term growth areas	Approximate number of lots (@ 10 lots per hectare)	Years supply (based on 98 building permits per annum)
Canterbury Road East Growth Area	320	3.2
Caddys Road Growth Area	380	3.8
Ponds Drive	3	0.3
Kees Road	9	0.9
Identified low density residential short term growth areas	Approximate number of lots (@ 0.4 lots per hectare)	Years supply (based on 98 building permits per annum)
Hopgood Court to Princess Fwy	29	0.29
Lewton Avenue Area	30	0.30
<b>Total short term</b>	<b>771</b>	<b>8.79</b>
Identified Medium- Long Term Growth Areas	Approximate number of lots (@ 10 lots per hectare)	Years supply (based on 98 building permits per annum)
Patullos Road to Bacchus Marsh Road	3,800	38
Manzeene Avenue/Kees Road	620	6.3
<b>Total long term</b>	<b>4,420</b>	<b>44.3</b>
<b>TOTAL (short &amp; long term)</b>	<b>5,191</b>	<b>53.09</b>

These statistics indicate, based on a conservative yield of 10 dwellings per hectare that there is around 21 years of lot supply nominated in the Structure Plan for short-medium term development. This includes 12.5 years of appropriately zoned land ready for development and 8.7 years of land identified for rezoning in the Structure Plan. As stated previously this forecast does not consider the requirements of public open space, drainage reserves, roads etc which would reduce the actual yield.

Map 15 – Lot Supply Map



## **7.3 Future Development**

### **7.3.1 Rezoning Requests and Interest**

#### **Caddy's Road**

The 'Caddys Road Area' is bound by Windermere Road, Flinders Road, Serendip Creek on the east and west sides of Caddys Road in the northern part of Lara and has an area of approximately 38 hectares. The area is currently zoned Rural Living, is sparsely developed and has a large proportion of land (approximately 20 hectares) in one ownership. The site is well located to services and facilities, has minimal flooding issues and is well placed to cater for residential development.

An amendment application (C73) to rezone the land from Rural Living zone to Residential 1 Zone is currently with Council after being previously lodged and placed on hold. The Structure Plan is supportive of this proposal subject to a Development Plan Overlay which addresses the matters set out in the Structure Plan including appropriate buffer treatments to Serendip Sanctuary. The proponents have prepared a concept plan and will request the amendment be formally considered at the adoption of the Structure Plan.

#### **Canterbury Road East**

This is an area of high ground between Hovells Creek, the Princes Highway and the Melbourne-Geelong Railway line. It is currently undeveloped rural land in one ownership and comprises of around 32 hectares. The land offers good opportunities for residential development providing buffers are maintained to flood prone areas and the Heales Road Industrial Estate to the south (minimum of 1000m). It is recommended the site be rezoned from Farming to Residential 1 subject to a Development Plan Overlay which addresses the matters set out in the Structure Plan.

#### **Ponds Drive**

This area is adjacent to Hovells Creek, has a history of flooding and a portion of land is currently zoned Urban Floodway. There is currently a levee between the subject land and the creek which requires upgrading prior to the land being declared 'flood free'. Council intends to carry out design and construction works on the Ponds Drive levee structure in order to provide an improved level of protection. Once the levee bank is constructed to CCMA standards the land can be declared flood free and the Floodway Zone could be replaced with a Residential zone. The rezoning and subdivision application would be subject to a Development Plan Overlay or similar mechanism, a subdivision layout and a Site Stormwater Management Plan and Drainage Management Plan being approved.

#### **Kees Road**

This area includes 10 Kees Road near the corner of Forest Road North which is currently zoned Low Density Residential Zone. The site is a former quarry and contains unconsolidated fill ranging in depths from 2.2 metres to 6.4 metres. Council has previously not supported a rezoning request of the land to Residential 1 Zone on the grounds Council engineers consider there is a risk Council will inherit the potentially expensive and ongoing maintenance and ultimate replacement of all road, drainage and footpath infrastructure resulting from unpredictable future soil settlement.

The proponent has indicated dwellings can be constructed using bored piers or precast piles to support them in the event of movement in the surrounding fill and that roads can be privately managed.

The land is centrally located within the township and could provide an opportunity for urban consolidation. Before considering a request for rezoning, the site would have to be cleared of unconsolidated fill and replaced with engineered fill to Councils satisfaction. It would also be subject to approval of a subdivision layout or Development Plan Overlay (DPO) and a Site Stormwater Management Plan.

### **Patullos Road to Bacchus Marsh Road**

A number of landholders in this area have got together and indicated they are ready to start some of the planning work required, such as hydrological, vegetation, archeological surveys to investigate the constraints and opportunities of the area. The Structure Plan supports the commencement of this preliminary planning work. Prior to any formal rezoning request being considered a detailed analysis of population, lot supply, lot demand and lot take up as well as other planning matters set out in the Structure Plan would need to be carefully considered to ensure there is not an over supply of residential zoned land.

### **Manzeene Avenue/Kees Road**

There was generally support from residents, as part of the 2007 Structure Plan, for rezoning this area from Rural Living to a higher density residential zone. The Structure Plan recommends this area be included in the future residential development area to connect the existing urban area of Lara with the Patullos Road to Bacchus Marsh Road area. As part of this Structure Plan it is recommended this area remain Rural Living to protect future urban consolidation opportunities. As mentioned above preliminary investigations into the opportunities and constraints of this area could begin.

### Recently Approved Amendments

Recently approved amendments are set out below. These amendments have been factored in when considering the lot supply analysis.

**C086** - Rezoned the land which is generally bounded by Buckingham Street, O'Hallorans Road and Canterbury Road West, now known as 'Grand Lakes' to part Residential 1 Zone and part Urban Floodway Zone, alters the application of the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay, introduces and applies Development Plan Overlay 13 to the land, and applies Development Plan Overlay 14 to part of the land.

**C088** - Rezoned a 2.282 hectare property, located at the northern end of Darkes Road, Lara and described as Lot 1 on Plan of Subdivision 408006Q, of Title of Volume 10247 Folio 515 from the Rural Living Zone to a Residential 1 Zone. The amendment also proposes a new Development Plan Overlay Schedule be applied to ensure that adequate stormwater and drainage treatments are put in place as part of future subdivision of the land.

**C160** - Rezoned 4 McHarrys Road and 140 Buckingham Street, Lara from Rural Living Zone to Low Density Residential Zone and apply a Development Plan Overlay Schedule 7 that will provide for the further subdivision of the land consistent with the provisions of the zone and the overlay.

### Areas Not Recommended for Rezoning to Residential or Rural Living

Council previously received a number of rezoning requests, mainly seeking rezoning from Rural and Rural Living Zones to one of the residential zones. Council deferred consideration of these requests pending the completion of the new Structure Plan. As part of this partial review the recommendations for the following sites remain unchanged:

### **McClelland Avenue between Austin Street and Old Melbourne Road**

This area is currently Rural Living Zone and is with reasonable proximity to services, facilities and infrastructure. However, the site is liable to flooding and even with improved infrastructure to mitigate flooding impacts there would be little improvement to this site. A large proportion of land and expense would be required for flood water management provision making the intensification of residential development in this area unsuitable.

### **Gebbies Rd at corner of Kees Rd**

A submission was previously received seeking the rezoning of 5 Gebbies Rd Lara from Rural Living Zone to Residential 1 Zone. The submission considers that the land could provide fifteen to twenty lots and is suitable for rezoning due to its proximity to services and facilities. This rezoning proposal would extend the Residential 1 zone across Kees Rd into a Rural Living area and is not recommended as part of the Structure Plan. This area may be revisited as part of the next Structure Plan review as an area for potential infill. This pocket of Rural Living zoned area would need to be considered as a whole.

### **Archimedes Avenue**

The eastern end of Archimedes Avenue is included in a Rural Living Zone contrasting with the central sections of the street which are zoned Low Density Residential. There has been much interest in extending the Low Density Residential Zone eastward to Watt Street to continue the same pattern of acreage subdivision. However, the North East Lara Flood Study has determined that the 100 year flood extent covers much of this area, concluding that structural or infrastructure measures will yield little benefit for the area. On this basis intensification of residential development in the area is not recommended.

### **Hicks Street**

Similar to the Archimedes and McClelland Avenues this area has some attributes that could accommodate more intensive residential subdivision and development. However, the existing main drainage system downstream of the site has inadequate capacity to accommodate the increased runoff that would result from redevelopment. The hydrologic and hydraulic analysis undertaken by the proponent did not yield a satisfactory technical feasibility for Council, and accordingly no change to the area is recommended by this Structure Plan.

### **Watt Street**

A submission was received to extend the Low Density Residential zone to the land at 25 Watt Street, currently Rural Living zone, allowing 0.4 ha lots. However, the area is not suitable for more intense development given difficulties with providing effective drainage and flood management infrastructure within and downstream of the area. Adverse impacts on downstream areas would not be acceptable.

### **Forest Road North**

A request to include land at the southwest corner of Forest Road North and Windermere Road in the Low Density Residential Zone to maximise the potential subdivision of the land has not been supported by the Structure Plan. It is planned to retain a rural residential edge along the southern side of Windermere Road and to not extend 'higher' density residential zones into the sector of Hovells Creek, Serendip Creek and Windermere Road.

### **Elcho and O'Hallorans Roads**

Land to the west of O'Hallorans Road and south of Elcho Road was previously sought for rezoning to Rural Living. Much of the land is included within a flood extent severely limiting its development potential. On balance it is recommended that the land remain in the Rural Zone.

It is recommended that the zoning of this area is reconsidered as part of the next review of the Structure Plan in approximately 10 years time when other long term growth areas are reviewed. Current policy does not recommend the creation of further Rural Living zoned land. It is preferable that Lara develops in an orderly and staged manner and is kept as compact as possible during its development. Once other growth areas have been considered it may be appropriate to look at this area for more intensive residential development. The current zoning should remain to protect this opportunity.

Significant work will also be required to address drainage and flooding issues for this area.

## **Forest Road South**

A submission to the Lara Structure Plan Public Discussion Document was received from the owners of 300 acres of land south of Lara and north of the Heales Rd Industrial Estate. The submission considers this land would be ideal for the Rural Living Zone.

Rezoning of this land is not supported because it proposes a residential land use (Rural Living Zone) that is not considered appropriate in the Heales Road Industrial Estate buffer area. The preferred land uses within this area such as intensive horticultural activity, market gardening, turf farming, golf courses or public parks.

## **McIntyre Rd/St Andrews Rd (Boomaroo Nursery area)**

A submission was received from Boomaroo Nursery, which is a major Lara employer and innovative industry seeking further expansion opportunities. The submission supports further rural residential expansion on outskirts of Lara to support the company's further development.

Council's Drainage Engineer advises that if there were compelling town planning reasons for this area to be considered for Rural Living Zoning, the proponent could be given the opportunity of demonstrating that the drainage/flooding constraints can be overcome or managed without adverse impact. However, it should be appreciated that if the findings are positive and best practice guidelines are applied, the lot yield would be very low with significant infrastructure provision costs.

Extension of the rural living zone to the east of Lara may eventually impact on the operations of Avalon airport and goes against the long term policy of maintaining a non-urban break between Geelong and Melbourne.

Due to the long term planning implications it is recommended that the proposal to allow future rural residential development in the vicinity of the Boomaroo Nursery is not supported. Council should continue to work with the landowners to consider other land uses that could be supported.

## **7.3.2 Analysis of Proposed Further Development**

The proposals outlined above need to be considered in the context of the relevant State and Local guidelines, net community benefit and in particular the following documents.

### **DPCD Practice Note – Rural Residential Development Guidelines**

This DPCD practice note provides guidance to planning authorities and proponents about the strategic work that is required when applying a Low Density or Rural Living Zone.

Considerations include:

- **Strategy:** Does rural residential development fit into the overall strategic planning of the municipality?
- **Housing need:** How much rural residential development is required to provide appropriate housing diversity and choice to meet housing needs?
- **Location:** Where should new rural residential development take place?
- **Subdivision and design:** Is the new rural residential development subdivided and designed in an attractive setting, offering high amenity and efficient infrastructure?

Minister's Direction No 6 is intended to ensure that all new rural residential development is broadly sustainable in these terms.

### **Role and Function of the Settlement**

The following strategies and policies provide direction to Council when considering the role and future direction of Lara:

- The Urban Growth Strategy
- The Rural Land Use Strategy

The key message of the above strategies is to maintain a compact urban and preserve productive agricultural land.

As summarised in Clause 21.08 Urban Growth of the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme, the following objectives are to be upheld when undertaking strategic planning within the municipality:

- Maintain a compact urban form and investigate opportunities for reconsolidation;
- Maintain non-urban breaks between settlements within Greater Geelong;
- Recognise drainage issues in Lara are a constraint on urban growth;
- Ensure the environment is protected from uncontrolled urban sprawl;
- Retain viable agricultural land;
- Account for existing natural and man-made constraints.

The Urban Growth Strategy, which forms the basis of Clause 21.08 designates Lara as a growth location, however any growth needs to have considerable regard to all of the policy directions as stated above.

## **7.4 Key Influences**

- There is a demand for additional retail floor space, including the provision of a full line supermarket.
- Expansion of the town centre is constrained by adjoining residential development and with the only real opportunity to extend into Austin Park.
- Pressure to rezone rural and rural living land to higher density residential land.
- State and Local Planning Policy designate Lara as an urban growth area.
- The present lot supply is available within the existing township boundary.

## **References**

In addition to the strategies referenced in the Structure Plan Background report the development of the structure Plan has been informed by the following reports:

- Lara Town Centre Urban Design Framework, David Lock and Associates, March, 2006
- Lara Structure Plan, City of Greater Geelong, 2007
- Lara Structure Plan Retail Development Issues, Tim Nott – Economic Analysis + Strategy, 2009