



traralgon activity centre plan: background reports
executive summary

prepared by hansen partnership pty ltd

july 2010

hansen partnership pty ltd
melbourne | vietnam

level 4 136 exhibition st
melbourne vic 3000
t 03 9654 8844 f 03 9654 8088
e info@hansen-online.com.au
w hansen-online.com.au
ABN 20 079 864 716 | ACN 079 864 716



table of contents

1	introduction	2
2	executive summary	3
2.1	planning context.....	3
2.2	economic assessment (retail, office and medium density housing)	4
2.3	car parking assessment.....	7
2.4	traffic and public transport assessment	8
2.5	community infrastructure and social needs analysis.....	9
2.6	urban design context	11



1 introduction

hansen partnership pty ltd has been engaged by Latrobe City Council to develop the Traralgon Activity Centre (TAC) Plan, which will consist of a Structure Plan, Urban Design Framework and Implementation Plan. The TAC Plan will guide projected population growth and associated service demand in Traralgon for the next 20 years.

To comprehensively inform the TAC Plan a series of Background reports have been prepared. These include:

- Planning Context Report.
- Economic Assessment (including retail, office, medium density housing).
- Community Infrastructure & Social Needs Analysis.
- Car Parking, Traffic Impact Assessment and Public Transport Reports.
- Urban Design Context Report.
- Consultation Summary (not included in Executive Summary)

The purpose of these reports is to analyse the existing conditions within the town centre and identify any opportunities for improvement and/or constraint to management of the TAC, also included with these reports is a Consultation Summary which provides details of issues which have been raised by the community and stakeholders in regards to the TAC.

The Background reports do not provide recommendations on managing the TAC. The findings in these reports are intended to provide Council with the background required to subsequently develop a Key Directions Report as part of Stage 2 of the project. Further stakeholder and community consultation sessions ('visioning' workshops) will also assist in developing the Key Directions Report which will be made available for public comment.



2 executive summary

2.1 planning context

prepared by hansen partnership pty ltd

- This background report analysed the following aspects of existing conditions in Traralgon's CAD:
 - state planning policy; assessing which aspects of state planning policy apply to the area and should be considered as part of any future plan;
 - local planning policy; identifying local policy which affect the study area;
 - zones and overlays;
 - strategic documents; including an analysis of the recommendations of previous strategic work undertaken which affects the town centre;
 - major land use and development applications that have been either recently lodged or issued which provide a framework for development anticipated in the near future.
- The report identifies a number of clauses in the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) and the Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) which provides policy direction for the planning and development of Activity Centres.
- In particular the Latrobe Planning Scheme MSS identifies:
 - The 'networked city' model where Traralgon is the designated 'commercial centre' of the 4 main towns.
 - An objective to provide the flexibility for development to occur in each town to accommodate the needs of its population
 - Support for high quality architectural and urban design outcomes.
 - The principles of the Healthy Urban Design Good Practice Guideline which aim to accommodate the community, pedestrians & cyclists first priority in street, building and open space design.



- The report also identified the following points in relation to current local planning policy:
 - Zoning in the TAC is generally logical and coherent.
 - There are no major zoning anomalies or constraints caused by the exiting zoning regime.
 - Overlay provisions in the town centre can be categorized as 'reactive' rather than 'pro-active'.
 - There may be a need for more 'proactive' controls to be integrated into the planning scheme to ensure the town develops appropriately.
 - Some consideration of the zoning at the periphery of the Business 1 Zone or the application of an Activity Centre Zone may need to be considered to preserve Traralgon's primary commercial function.
 - Some additional overlay provisions (depending on zoning choices) may be required to ensure as development in the town centre intensifies, elements of good urban design are incorporated.
- The report concluded that many of the issues identified in previous reports remain unresolved and will need to be addressed by this project. This was reflected in the consultation feedback which saw many of the same issues raised by the community and key stakeholders.

2.2 economic assessment (retail, office and medium density housing)

prepared by tim nott

- This report identifies that Traralgon has continued to become larger compared with the other main towns in Gippsland which means the Traralgon Central Activities District is more likely to be the focus of investment that is meant to serve the whole Gippsland region.
- It acknowledges the Network City concept and identifies that Traralgon does not have a range of activities that are present in many other major provincial centres, as the functions of a provincial centre are served by the four main towns of the municipality. These include:
 - Regional hospital, which is provided at a location mid way between Traralgon and Morwell;
 - Substantial regional court and legal facilities, which are provided at Morwell;
 - University campus, which is provided at Churchill (Monash University);
 - Cinema, with an eight-screen multiplex provided at Mid Valley Shopping Centre, and cinemas at Bairnsdale, Leongatha, Sale, Warragul and Wonthaggi; and



- Full department store, with none provided in Gippsland, and the nearest provided at Dandenong and Frankston.

Despite this, Traralgon continues to grow ahead of the other main towns.

retail

- Traralgon CAD has a very strong hold on the spending of trade area residents, particularly given the proximity of Mid Valley Shopping Centre. Traralgon plays a larger than average role in retail provision for its catchment, demonstrated by considering that Traralgon CAD currently captures 67% of retail spending in its trade area.
- The next step in the evolution of the retail hierarchy in Gippsland is for one of the existing sub-regional centres to attract investment in a full department store to grow into a full regional retail centre. The Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) supports Traralgon as the designated commercial centre. While Traralgon is supported from a policy viewpoint for the location of a department store, accommodating a department store within the centre will provide a challenge. If Traralgon does attract a department store, it will draw on the retail expenditure of almost the whole Gippsland region.
- The report identifies three growth scenarios: a high growth scenario where Traralgon attracts a department store and is cemented as the regional centre for retail; a medium growth where the current hierarchy of retail growth continues; and a low growth scenario where a department store is established elsewhere.
- High growth: If Traralgon is to attract a department store and associated retail, it will need to accommodate of the order of 40,000 sq m of additional retail floorspace over the next 21 years. With associated car-parking, this will require around 80,000 sq m – 8 ha - of constructed space (building and car-parking).
- Medium growth: If the existing scenario continues and none of the larger Gippsland towns attracts a department store, then the Traralgon CAD can expect to continue to attract its current shares of resident spending and some growth in visitor spending in line with regional population growth. Under this scenario, the CAD will need to accommodate around 20,000 to 25,000 sq m of additional space over the next 21 years. With associated car-parking, the total constructed space requirement will be approximately 45,000 to 50,000 sq m.
- Low growth: If a department store is established elsewhere then there will be no significant requirement for retail growth in Traralgon CAD over the period to 2031, except possibly the addition of a further supermarket sometime after 2021. This would require some reorganisation of existing activity in order to



accommodate the 3,000 to 4,000 sq m floorplate and associated car-parking.

- Decisions about the location of a regional retail function (department store) to serve Gippsland will play a very significant part in the future growth of the Traralgon CAD. For Traralgon to continue as the primary commercial hub (consistent with current local policy), Council will need to play an active role in facilitating this.

offices

- There are approximately 58,000 sq m of offices in the CAD (34% of total occupied space) which provide between 2,000 and 3,000 jobs. Vacant office space is around 2% of the total space used for offices.
- The report forecasts that Traralgon will need to accommodate 27,000 sq m of additional office floorspace between 2010 and 2031. This constitutes 70% of all the additional office floorspace required in Latrobe City over the period. This amounts to approximately 21,000 sq m in the activity centre over the period from 2010 to 2031, or around 1,000 sq m per year on average.

medium density housing

- The report suggests that the market for good quality medium/high density housing is presently around 3% of all medium density housing. Some of that housing could be provided within the CAD.

total additional floorspace

- The report summarises the total additional floorspace required in the activity centre considering retail, office, housing and entertainment requirements:
 - If Traralgon is attracts investment in a department store, the activity floorspace in the CAD will grow by approximately 100,000 sq m over the period to 2031 (this would be increased to around 170,000sq m with associated car parking at current rates). Such a major addition to the centre will require extensive redevelopment of existing space and/or extension of the boundaries of the commercial area.
 - If the major retail investment is established elsewhere, Traralgon CAD is still likely to expand over the period to 2031, albeit by a much smaller margin – perhaps of the order of 26,000 to 45,000 sq m of activity space – depending on whether the centre is able to continue to capture significant investment in office development.
- Urban design is identified as an important part of the attractiveness of a centre for users and for investors. If the CAD is to grow into a regional centre, high quality buildings and urban spaces will be required in

order to command the respect and affection (and repeat business) of the regional population.

2.3 car parking assessment

prepared by cardno grogan richards

The following summarises the main findings of this report:

- Peak parking demand for the TAC on the Friday occurred at 11:00am with 3219 spaces out of the 5884 spaces surveyed occupied, equivalent to an occupancy level of 55%. For the CBD core, 2954 spaces out of 4664 were occupied also at 11am, equivalent to an occupancy level of 63%.
- Peak parking demand on the Saturday occurred at 11:00am with 1942 spaces out of the 5884 spaces surveyed occupied, equivalent to an occupancy level of 33%. For the CBD core, 1753 spaces out of 4664 were occupied also at 11am, equivalent to an occupancy level of 38%.
- A comparison of weekday to weekend survey results indicate that on-street occupancy rates show little variance from Friday to Saturday, however, off-street occupancy rates drop significantly on the weekend.
- High levels of occupancy (>85%) were recorded across the weekday and weekend surveys in some on-street sections within the heart of the CBD with convenient access to shop frontages and cafés. These spaces receive a high turnover due to the 1 hour restriction and high level of enforcement. This high turnover induces an expectation for drivers to be able to find a convenient parking space which causes traffic congestion with cars circulating for a space. Potential options to rectify this problem, for further discussion in Stage 2 of the project, include:
 - Increasing the restrictions from 1-hour to 2-hour parking to reduce turnover by removing the 'expectation' to find an available parking space.
 - Reintroducing metered parking in these highly utilised sections to more evenly distribute demand to surrounding street sections with much lower occupancy rates.
- Although off-street parking occupancy rates were relatively low across the survey periods, high levels of occupancy (>85%) were recorded on Friday in both of the two public off-street long term car parks provided within the CBD, being the multi-level Seymour Street Car Park and the Church Street car park. This indicates that private parking spaces along with 'customer only' spaces and time restricted off-street spaces are generally underutilised.



- From responses received during the consultation process and the results of the surveys it appears there is a shortage of longer term parking available for the centre that is free-of-charge. However, spare long term parking capacity exists in permit only spaces. Council needs to decide whether it is appropriate for employees to pay for permit spaces to park all day within the CDB or whether free-of-charge spaces should be provided as has historically been the case. Employees currently do not have the option to leave their car at home, as public transport facilities are limited.
- Options which could be considered as part of Stage 2 of the project, to rectify the shortage of free-of-charge all day parking, include the following:
 - Converting the mid level of the multi-deck Seymour Street Car Park to all day parking (currently a mix of permit parking and 3 hour parking).
 - Construct an additional level above the existing top level of the multi-deck car park. This would provide approximately 100 additional spaces. The structure has also been designed to cater for this additional level.

2.4 traffic and public transport assessment

prepared by cardno grogan richards

The report included the following options in response to the analysis undertaken:

- The intersection of Franklin Street and Post Office Place could be signalised to reduce traffic congestion at this intersection caused by the high volume of pedestrian traffic;
- Analysis indicates that the following intersections operate at or near capacity with significant delays and queues during peak times and will require mitigating works to cater for any major increases in traffic volumes:
 - Princes Highway / Breed Street / Hyland Highway;
 - Princes Highway / Grey Street;
- The proposal for a future east-west connection between Breed Street and Franklin Street to the north of the activity centre requires further investigation with regard to alignment and capacity;
- Existing vertical alignment (crest) of Breed Street provides limited sight lines at both Seymour Street and Hotham Street intersections and modifications are recommended at these intersections to improve safety;
- Further investigations are required to assess improvements that can be made to pedestrian safety in the



study area particularly at existing roundabout locations. The possibility of introducing formalised pedestrian crossings at the roundabouts being one of the options to be considered;

- Improve bicycle facilities within the activity centre as discussed in the Latrobe City Bicycle Plan 2001-2010 and undertake further investigations as to the suitability of bicycle routes within the activity centre;
- The public transport assessment identified that the following issues affect Traralgon:
 - First train into Traralgon does not arrive until 9.00am which does not suit most office workers and students;
 - Latrobe Valley Buslines in discussions with the Department of Transport have requested an upgraded bus terminal on the north side of Post Office Place east of Franklin Street (on the south side of Stocklands);
 - Bus services are generally inadequate both in terms of span and frequency of services;
 - Load limit on Franklin Street crossing of Traralgon Creek is 8 tonnes which limits bus services operating in this area;
 - Latrobe Valley Buslines have requested provision of right turn arrow at Franklin Street/Seymour Street signalled intersection;
 - Provision of a late night bus service; 'nightrider'. It is understood that this was successfully trialled sometime ago but ceased as funds were not available to continue its operation.
 - A recent review of bus operations in the Latrobe Valley has been undertaken by the Department of Transport. This review is central to informing the TACP regarding public transport operations in Traralgon. However, at this stage the recommendations of this study have not been released.

2.5 community infrastructure and social needs analysis

prepared by capire consulting

- This report summarises the key findings from a number of background reports and the demographics of Traralgon, in particular looking at the key demographic changes likely to occur over the next 20 years.
- Among the key demographic information is that Traralgon will have increased older population, but also an increased younger population, who will continue to be the most dominant age group, unlike much of the rest of Victoria. There will also be an increase number of couples without dependants.



- The existing facilities in and around the study area are then assessed and the findings of the consultation process detailed.
- The existing provision of facilities in Traralgon is then benchmarked against the Growth Areas of metropolitan Melbourne. This analysis showed that Traralgon generally has an excellent provision of services with some exceptions. The gaps in existing social and community infrastructure are identified as follows:
 - Multi purpose community centre (similar to Kath Teychenne Centre)
 - Community Meeting Spaces
 - Youth Spaces
 - Council Aquatic Leisure Centre

These gaps should be rectified as part of any future planning process, noting that any change to the use of the VRI hall within the Station Precinct will further reduce the amount of community meeting spaces.

- The following principles were identified to guide the creation of a plan for the TAC:
 - Community facilities should be co-located with compatible services, to improve access and service coordination and delivery;
 - The current civic precinct is considered to be the community services hub – any new community facility should be co-located and integrated into this existing hub;
 - Any new community facility should be well connected by walking and cycle paths and be close to public transport connections;
 - Walking and cycle options to existing community facilities should be enhanced to encourage healthy living;
 - Passive surveillance should be encouraged around community facilities and open space;
 - Connections between key assets of Traralgon should be enhanced, including connections from the Traralgon CBD to Victory Park and the Station Precinct;
 - Open space in and around Traralgon CBD should be of high quality and have appropriate facilities to encourage community use (i.e. shelter, seats and BBQ areas);
 - Facilities to cater to a range of ages and different community groups, including the growing CALD



community, should be encouraged. CALD communities particularly identified a need for adequate meeting places during the community consultation;

- Flexible community spaces should be incorporated into any new community facility to allow for different uses and allow facilities to adapt to changing community needs; and
- Improved amenity across the Traralgon CBD should be enhanced to encourage greater use of community spaces.

2.6 urban design context

prepared by hansen partnership pty ltd

- The existing 'structure and activity', 'urban form and streetscape', landscape and topography' and 'access and movement' are analysed within this report.
- From this analysis a series of key directions which respond to the issues identified have been determined. These can be summarised as follows:
 - Retain a sense of human scale which results from the existing fine grained subdivision pattern
 - Work with the current 'left over' spaces of the laneways and intra-block void space currently used for car parking
 - Strengthen the role and definition of the inner core and two key axes (Kay Street and Franklin Street). There are real opportunities in this area through management of the post office, courthouse and surrounds
 - Create improved linkages to Victory Park
 - Introduce a greater mix of uses and more mixed-use development, and explore options for higher density residential.
 - Create a cycle and pedestrian friendly activity centre
 - Define and consolidate edges to Princes Highway and identify entry points into the activity centre.