



Healesville structure Plan
Discussion Paper
February 2013

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Healesville Structure Plan



Executive Summary - Discussion Paper

Healesville has been identified as the next priority in Council's structure planning program for its activity centres. This is due to its importance as a regional centre and significant tourist destination.

The purpose of the Healesville Structure Plan is to establish a framework for the future land use, development and urban design of the Healesville township. It will guide public and private sector actions related to land use and built form, movement networks, public spaces and infrastructure provision.

The Structure Plan will be primarily focussed on the Healesville township but some issues on land outside the township, but within the 3777 postcode area will also be considered.

The Discussion Paper is the first step in preparing the Structure Plan. Community responses will inform all stages of the project, including the Future Directions Paper and the draft Structure Plan.

The Discussion Paper identifies the policy context and the demographic profile for Healesville noting that in 2011, the population of Healesville and the surrounding settlements was 10,333 and that on current estimates, the population of this area is forecast to slightly increase over the next 20 years to an estimated population of 10,763.

The Discussion Paper also provides an overview of the current situation in Healesville and future plans and projects based on seven themes.

Housing

In 2011 there were 4166 private dwellings in the Healesville area. Most of these dwellings are in the form of separate houses (91.1%). Of these dwellings, the proportion of medium density housing (villa units and similar) has increased from 4.9% in 1991 to 7.3% in 2011.

While development is constrained by the Urban Growth Boundary, the Regional Strategy Plan, some years ago, anticipated the need for a limited increase in Healesville's housing in the future. It identified, subject to detailed assessment, where this housing could be located. The Structure Planning process should consider whether additional housing opportunities should be made available, where such housing should be located and whether the existing housing stock meets community needs now and in the future.

Business

The town centre is mainly focussed on convenience retailing and the visitor market. Only 5% of shopfront commercial floor space is vacant. There are two industrial areas in Healesville, which mainly serve the local community. There is limited potential within the industrial areas for further development.

A draft Activity Centre Network Strategy for Yarra Ranges identifies Healesville as a Large Town Centre and seeks to ensure that any new development will improve the level of services, facilities and employment opportunities. Its recommendations for Healesville include:

- Investigating opportunities to improve the integration of the different components of the centre
- Considering the potential for expansion of supermarket facilities; tourist-related retail and visitor accommodation
- Investigating the potential of specific sites for development.

Council's Economic Development Strategy recognises the need to embrace sustainable development, innovation and a low carbon future. Healesville is well placed to capitalise on encouraging sustainable tourism opportunities such as accommodation, food and wine enterprises and eco-tourism activities. Increasing economic activity is important in improving community wellbeing by, for example, creating local employment but it is important to ensure development is sustainable and not at the expense of environmental and cultural values.

Heritage, Built Form and Public Spaces

The presence of significant heritage buildings along with heritage trees in the main street make an important contribution to the character of Healesville town centre. Only a small proportion of the buildings in the study area with potential heritage values have been identified in the planning scheme. Further work is needed to identify whether more properties should be considered for heritage protection.

The main active open spaces for Healesville are Queens Park and the Don Road Recreation Reserve and Master Plans have recently been adopted for these parks. In the longer term, the role of Coronation Park and the Railway Precinct need to be considered.

A planning scheme amendment is proposed to guide future development in the town centre. There may also be a need for additional design guidelines to ensure that any development proposed near the gateways to the township is of an appropriate design and scale.

Natural Environment

Healesville is located on the junction of the Watts River and Grace Burn and there a number of other waterways in the area. They have important environmental and cultural values.

There are areas of remnant indigenous vegetation around the township, including some which have a threatened or endangered status. Planning controls need to ensure protection and enhancement of this vegetation, habitats and waterways. If further residential development is to occur in the township, the quality and extent of existing natural vegetation will be an important consideration in determining where this further development should occur.

The scenic landscape setting of Healesville is a key factor in the township's popularity for new residents and tourists and it is important that it continues to be protected. It is also essential to ensure the risk of bushfire is considered when planning for the future and in considering new land uses and development.

Community Facilities and Services

Healesville and the surrounding settlements are supported by a broad range of services and associated facilities, including a number of important community service organisations. There is a need to ensure that these services and facilities are appropriate to the size and function of the township and that they will accommodate any additional population or changing needs.

Physical Infrastructure

A more detailed assessment of the capacity of available infrastructure, including mains electricity, gas, water and sewerage, will be undertaken as part of the preparation of the Future Directions Paper. Melbourne Water has identified significant areas of land along the Yarra River and its tributaries within the Healesville township as being subject to flooding. Work on linking Healesville to the National Broadband Network will commence in 2013.

Transport & Parking

Maroondah Highway is the major arterial road connecting Healesville to metropolitan Melbourne. Other roads in the Healesville area designated by VicRoads as main roads are Don Road, Badger Creek Road, Healesville-Kinglake Road and Healesville-Yarra Glen Road. There are existing shared walking/bike trails along River Street, part of Crowley Road and parts of Don Road and Healesville-Kinglake Road.

On-street and off-street car parking is available in the township with a mixture of short and long-term spaces being provided. A 2008 parking study found that there was an adequate provision of parking in the area but circumstances may have changed. Public transport and taxi services are very limited.

Healesville was previously connected by rail from Lilydale via Yarra Glen which closed in 1980. Much of the infrastructure and public railway land remains. The Yarra Valley Railway, a volunteer based organisation, has restored sections of the track from Healesville. They run a tourist railway from Healesville to Tunnel Hill. The group plan to progressively restore the railway to Yarra Glen.

The Discussion Paper poses a series of questions relevant to the Healesville Structure Plan based on the seven themes. The questions are just prompts.

Everyone with an interest in Healesville is strongly encouraged to contribute ideas, aspirations and identify their priorities for the Healesville Structure Plan.

1 Introduction



Background

Healesville has been identified as the next priority in Council's structure planning program for its activity centres. This is due to its importance as a regional centre and significant tourist destination. There are a range of development pressures and planning issues impacting on Healesville that could be addressed through the preparation of a comprehensive strategic plan and agreed vision for the township.

The purpose of the Structure Plan is to establish a framework for the future land use, development and urban design of the Healesville township. It will guide public and private sector actions related to land use and built form, movement networks, public spaces and infrastructure provision.

What is a Structure Plan?

A Structure Plan sets a strategic land use policy direction for a locality or place having regard to the broad objectives of:

- Creating a sense of place and community
- Encouraging greater housing choice, diversity and affordable places to live
- Facilitating an accessible, functional and vibrant town centre
- Providing for local employment and sustainable business activity
- Seeking better transport options
- Responding to a changing energy future and encouraging environmental sustainability
- Delivering accessible, integrated and adaptable community infrastructure.

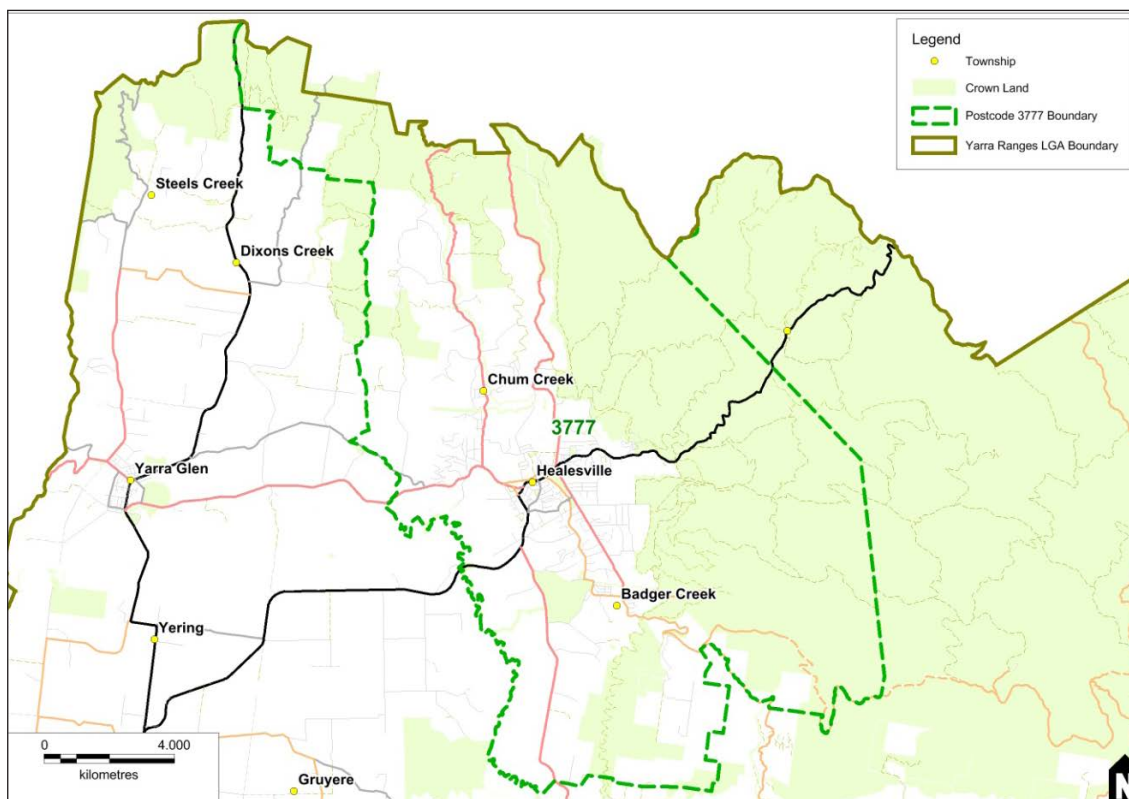
It considers the aspirations and concerns of the residents and landowners of a neighbourhood or township and the broader policy context in which it must function. It also identifies steps that can be taken by Council to achieve policy objectives and, once finalised, will provide guidance to landowners and investors about preferred future development.

While related, Structure Planning is distinct from Community Planning. Community Planning at Yarra Ranges supports and assists with projects and plans initiated, developed and carried out by members of local communities. These projects may or may not address built form and planning issues.

Study Area

The Healesville Structure Plan project is primarily focussed on the Healesville township. The project will also consider some issues outside the township within the 3777 postcode area – see Figure 1.

Map 1: Land Within 3777 Postcode Area



Source: Yarra Ranges Council

These issues include the existing zoning of satellite areas around Healesville such as Badger Creek and the future of some sites currently set aside in the planning scheme for a special use.

Healesville supports a number of surrounding settlements and the views of these communities will be sought as part of the Structure Plan process.

Purpose of Discussion Paper

This Discussion Paper provides a brief overview about the current situation in Healesville, including the policy context, and identifies future plans and projects.

It also poses some discussion questions but they are not exhaustive. Everyone with an interest in Healesville is strongly encouraged to contribute ideas, aspirations, priorities and express their views about the township's future.

The Structure Planning Process

The Discussion Paper is the first step in preparing a Structure Plan for Healesville and responses will inform the next stages of the project.

Where we are at...



Submissions received in response to the Discussion Paper will be considered in the development of a Future Directions Paper. The Future Directions Paper will also be informed by consultant reports about Healesville's planning controls, economy, community and physical infrastructure, environment, transport and parking.

There will be further community consultation on both the Future Directions Paper and the draft Structure Plan.

Once the Future Directions Paper has been prepared, a more in depth consultation with community members and other stakeholders will take place. Community insights and views will be sought through a written survey and a facilitated workshop where aspirations and issues can be discussed and opportunities identified.

At the draft Healesville Structure Plan stage, written submissions will again be sought.

Once the Healesville Structure Plan is finalised, a planning scheme amendment will then be exhibited for public comment with the intention of incorporating the recommendations and findings of the Structure Plan into the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme.

2 Planning Context



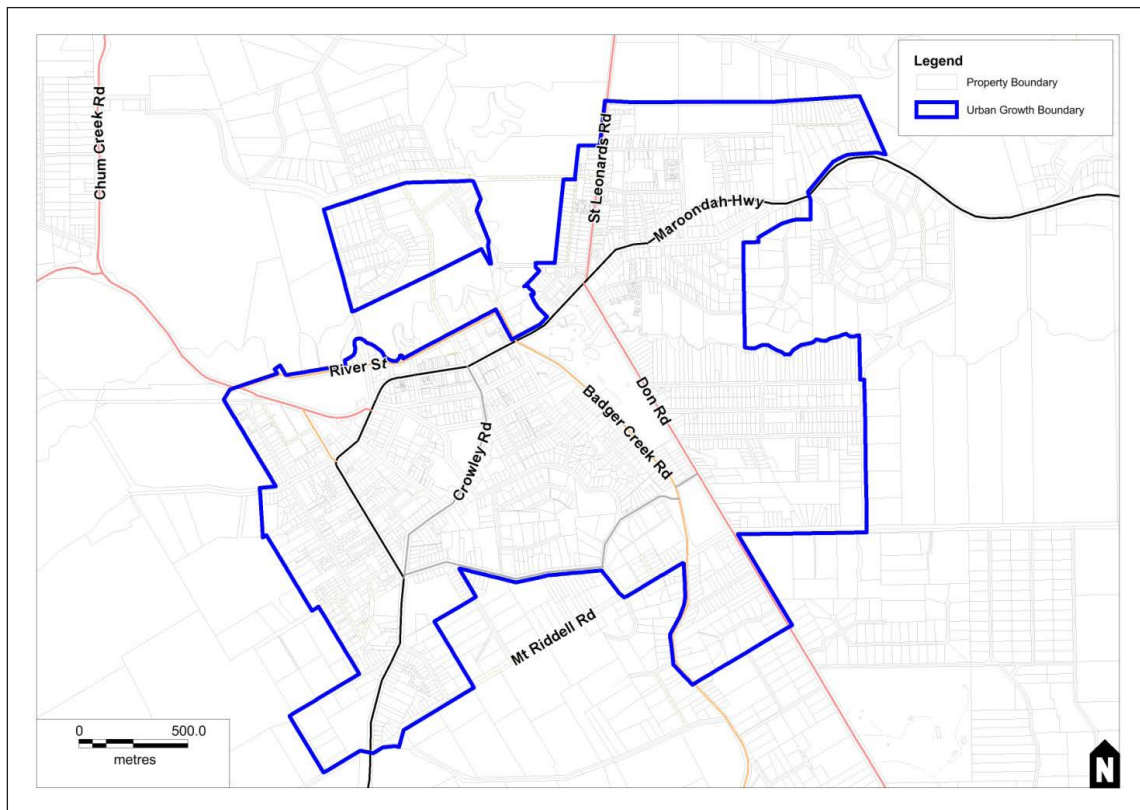
Planning Scheme

Land use and development in Yarra Ranges is regulated by the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme. Many developments require a planning permit before they can proceed. The planning scheme consists of an ordinance and maps. The ordinance sets out, in writing, the requirements of the planning scheme, including local policies and the requirements that apply to specific types of development. The maps show the zoning and, in some cases, the planning overlays which apply to the land.

Zones reflect the preferred dominant land use, such as residential, industrial or rural, and control the type of use which is allowed, may be allowed subject to a permit or prohibited in that zone. Overlays ensure that important aspects of the land, such as areas of significant vegetation or land subject to flooding, or high bushfire risk is recognised.

There is an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) (see Map 2) around the perimeter of the Healesville township. The UGB is intended to contain the urban development of metropolitan Melbourne and the surrounding townships and protect agricultural land and other non-urban uses.

Map 2: Urban Growth Boundary



Source: Yarra Ranges Council

Any amendment to the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme must be approved by the State Minister for Planning and be in accordance with the State Planning Policy Framework. The State Government is currently reviewing the planning zones that apply in Victoria. The review is expected to be completed in the first half of 2013.

The State Government is also preparing a new metropolitan strategy for Melbourne that will replace the current strategy Melbourne 2030. The new Strategy will be finalised in mid 2013 and will set a 40 year vision for the future direction of Melbourne. Many of the issues that this Strategy will be covering are relevant to Healesville and include such things as green wedges, transport, infrastructure, housing and employment.

Further information about the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme can be found at:
<http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/yarraranges>

Further information about the State Government planning zones review and the new metropolitan strategy can be found at www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning

Regional Strategy Plan

The Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Regional Strategy Plan was introduced in 1982 to protect the special features and character of the region. It applies to all properties in the municipality and provides a broad strategic framework for land use and development. Any amendment to the planning scheme must be in accordance with the Regional Strategy Plan.

For further information about the Regional Strategy Plan contact Strategic Planning on 9294 6165.

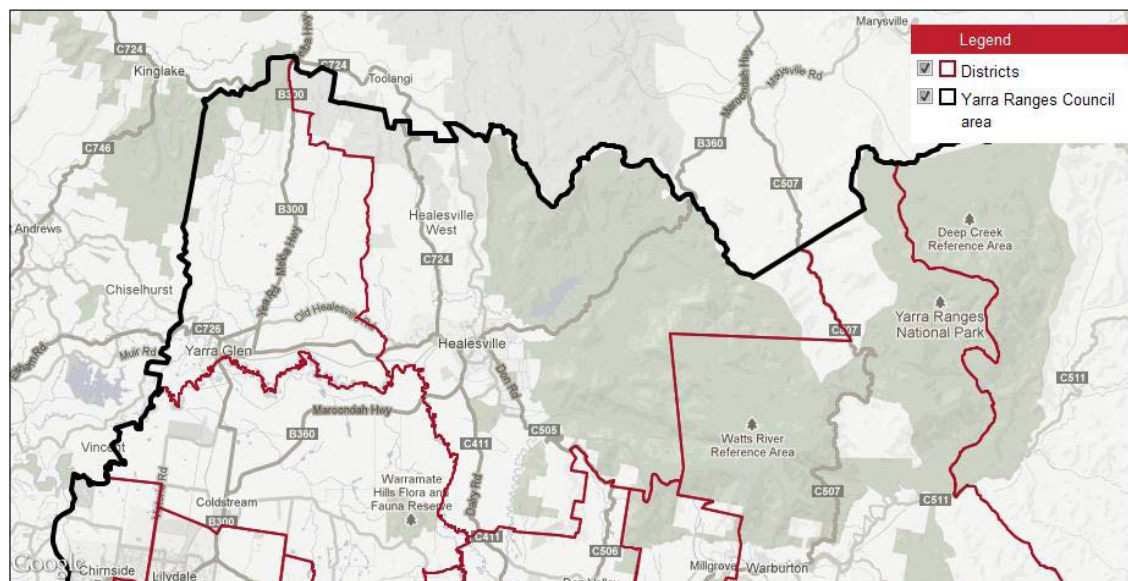
3 Snapshot of Healesville



This part of the Discussion Paper provides a snapshot of Healesville. Most of the information is based on the 2011 Census of Population and Housing.

The information is derived from combined data for a physical area which is shown in Map 2 and is described as 'Healesville and Surrounds'.

Map 2: Healesville & Surrounds



Source: Australia Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing

The population projections are based on the 2006 Census. These projections are expected to be updated in the first half of 2013 and further work on the Healesville Structure Plan will take into account the updated information.

Population and forecast change

In 2011, the population of Healesville and Surrounds was 10,333. Figure 1 shows a population breakdown by township for postcode 3777, with most residents of the area living in Healesville and Badger Creek.

Figure 1: Population of Healesville & Surrounds, 2011

Area	Population
Badger Creek	1,922
Castella	344
Chum Creek	932
Healesville	6,839
Toolangi	289
Total population, postcode 3777	10,333

Note: The slight discrepancy between individual areas and the population total for postcode 3777 is due to ABS adjustment of some values to avoid release of confidential data.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing

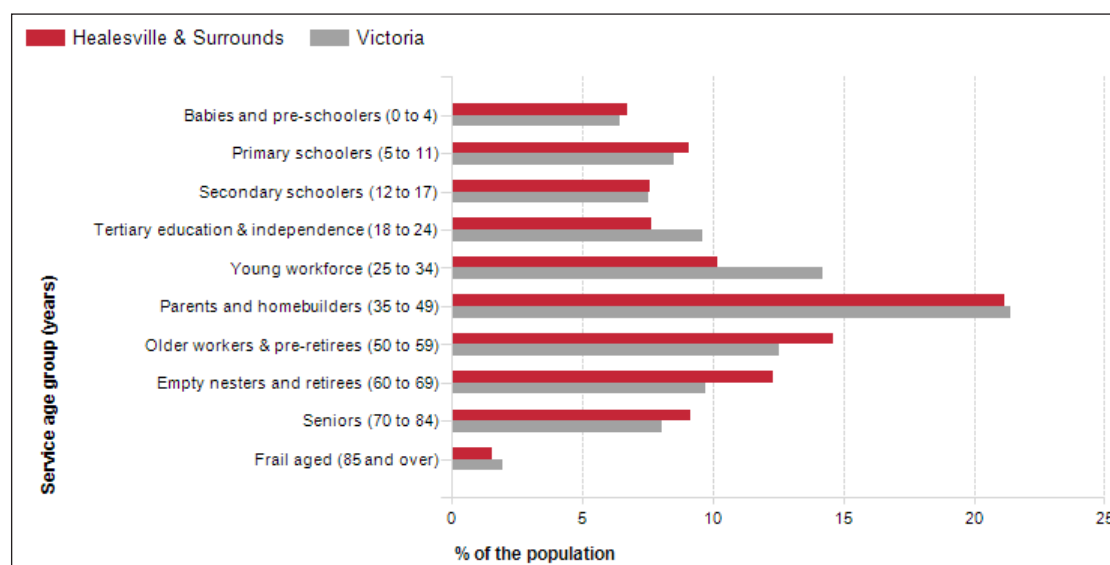
The population increased slightly between 1991 and 2011, a result of new dwellings being added to the area.

The more recent Census data shows that from 2006 to 2011, Healesville population increased by 404 people (4.4%). This represents an average annual population change of 0.86% per year over the period, higher than expected for this period. On current estimates, Healesville and Surrounds population is forecast to increase to 10,763.

Age Structure

As shown in Figure 2, in 2011 Healesville and Surrounds has an above average number of residents aged 50 years or more, and also a high number of children and teenagers aged 0-17. It had a below average number of adults aged 18 to 49, and also a below average number of frail aged residents in the 85 plus age range.

Figure 2: Age Structure of Healesville & Surrounds, 2011

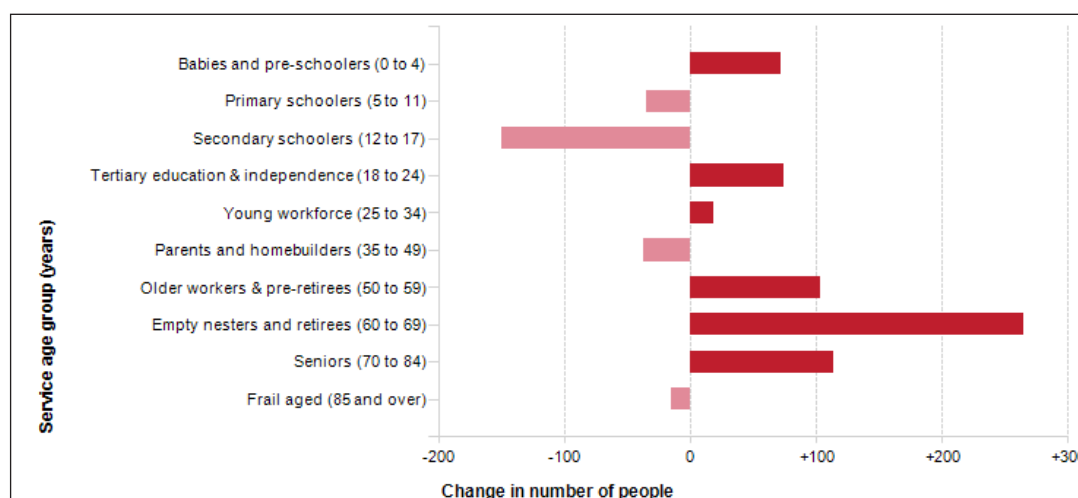


Source: Australia Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing*

This is typical of a rural township where many young people studying or intent on becoming financially independent relocate for education, work and lifestyle reasons, but may return to the area in later years.

As shown in Figure 3, over the past five years, the number of babies and toddlers aged 0-4 has grown, as has the number of young people aged 18-34. The number of older residents aged 50 to 84 has also increased.

Figure 3: Change in Age Structure, Healesville & Surrounds, 2006-2011

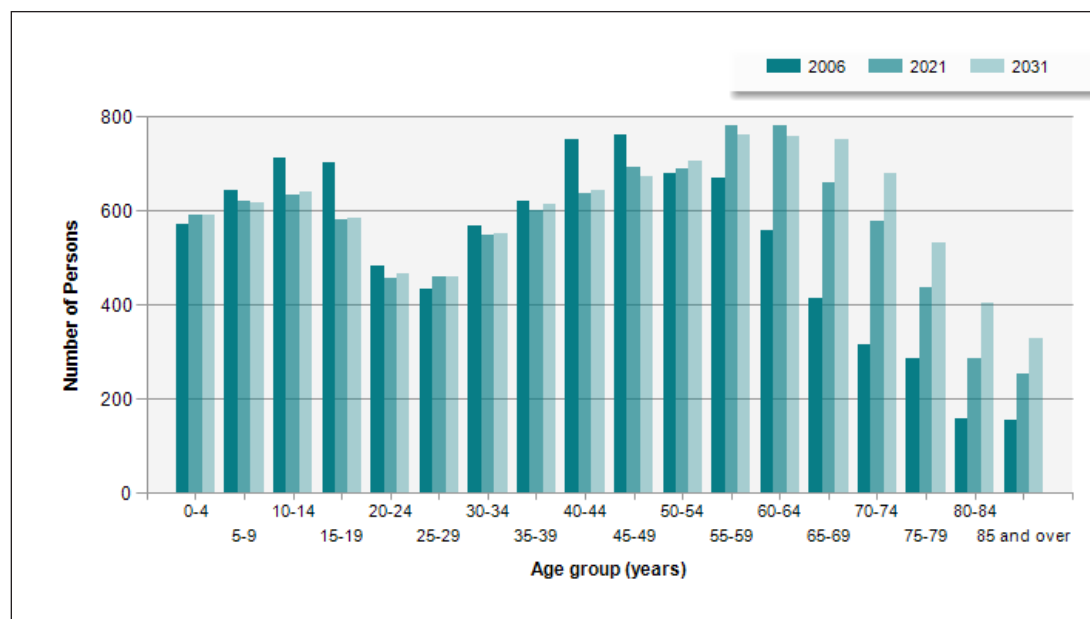


Source: Australia Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing

The main decrease has been in school aged children in the 5-17 age range, and correspondingly, the age group for parents of school children, 35-49 year olds. This could be due to families with school children moving away, but is more likely to be due to population ageing, with the past generation of children moving into the 18 plus age range.

As shown in Figure 4, the forecast data predicts a substantial increase in the number of residents aged 65 and over as the population ages, combined with a drop in the number aged 5-24. The number of adults aged 40-50 is also forecast to drop substantially.

Figure 4: Forecast Age Structure, Healesville & Surrounds, 2006-2031

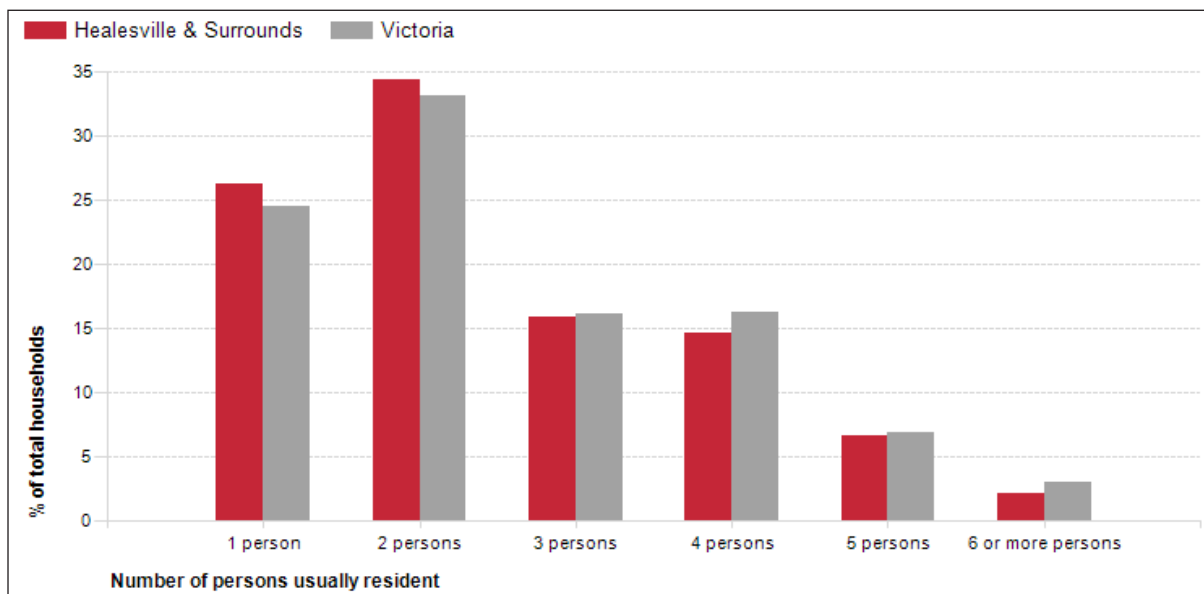


Source: Australia Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing

Households

Figure 5 shows that in 2011, residents of Healesville and Surrounds lived in 3,606 households. Households increased by 265 between 2006 and 2011.

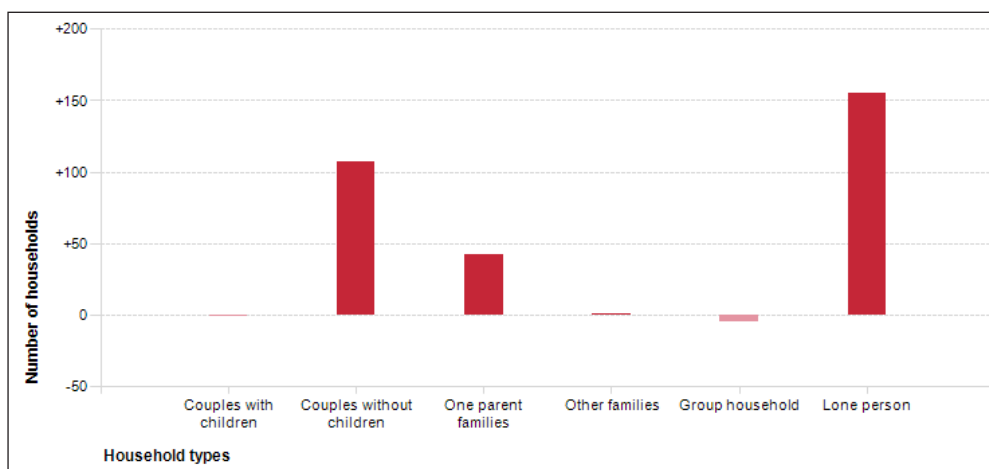
Figure 5: Household Size, Healesville & Surrounds, 2011



Source: Australia Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing

The largest changes in household types in Healesville and Surrounds between 2006 and 2011 were in the number of lone person households and couples without children households. As shown In Figure 6, Healesville and Badger Creek have a higher than average proportion of single parent families, while Chum Creek is home to mostly couple households.

Figure 6: Change in Household Types, Healesville & Surrounds, 2006-2011



Source: Australia Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing

The largest increase in household type between 2006 and 2021 is forecast to be in couples without dependents. In contrast, couple families with dependents are forecast to decrease.

Car ownership

The ability to access services and employment is strongly influenced by availability of transport. The number of motor vehicles per household is influenced by age structure, the number of adults in a household, access to public transport, distance to shops, and household income.

Most households in Healesville and Surrounds own at least one car (88% compared to 85.5% across Victoria). Overall, 32% of the households owned one car, 36% owned two cars and 21% owned three cars or more.

It should be noted, however, that 5.9% of households (221 households) do not own a vehicle. This is likely to have a significant impact on their ability to access services, employment and education considering the very limited public transport options available in Healesville.

Ethnicity

Compared to Victoria, in 2011 Healesville and Surrounds had a smaller proportion of people born overseas along with a smaller proportion of people from a non-English speaking background.

Overall, 15% of the population was born overseas and 5% were from a non-English speaking background, compared with 26% and 20% respectively for Victoria. The main countries of origin for residents are the United Kingdom, New Zealand and the Netherlands.

Healesville and Surrounds has a significant indigenous population. The highest concentration is in Badger Creek.

At the 2011 census, there were 269 persons living within postal area 3777 that identified as being either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. This represented 2.6% of the Healesville and Surrounds population. This is significantly higher than the proportion of the Victorian population that is indigenous, which in 2011 was 0.7%.

Education and Employment

In 2011, 4.5% of residents were unemployed, below the 5.4% Victorian average. The main occupations (see Figure 7) were technicians and trades workers, professionals and managers. Healesville and Surrounds had an above average number of technicians and trades workers (20% compared to 14%) and a below average number of professionals (15% compared to 22%). It had an average level of managers (13%).

Figure 7: Employment by Occupation, 2011



Source: Australia Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing

In 2011, 46% of residents of Healesville and Surrounds aged 15 and over had no educational qualifications, compared to 44% across Victoria. Twelve per cent had a Bachelor or higher degree, well below the 21% Victorian average; 22% had a vocational qualification, well above the 16% Victorian average.

The median weekly household income in Healesville and Surrounds is \$1,026 per week, well below the Victorian average of \$1,216. On an individual level, Healesville and Surrounds has a lower proportion of persons earning a high income (those earning \$1,500 per week or more) and a higher proportion of low income persons (those earning less than \$400 per week). Overall, 7.4% of the population earned a high income, and 39.0% earned a low income, compared with 11.5% and 36.8% respectively for Victoria.

Further information about the Healesville population can be found at www.profile.id.com.au/yarra-ranges

4 Discussion themes



Healesville has a strong sense of place that is shaped by its history, people, unique streetscapes, business environment, open spaces, community facilities and infrastructure.

As the largest rural township in the Yarra Valley, Healesville has a diverse mix of **housing** and **businesses** to meet diverse needs.

Healesville's **public spaces** are characterised by leafy streetscapes, quality **heritage** buildings and highly valued parks and open spaces. The public realm provides the key impression of the town for visitors and residents alike.

The **natural environment** features protected water catchments, flora and fauna set within a striking natural landscape.

The community glue of Healesville is represented by the many **community facilities and services**. These facilities reflect the importance of Healesville in the region.

The provision of **physical infrastructure and transport and parking** are services to the town that support and foster functionality.

Seven themes are detailed below in order to inform the discussion about the Healesville Structure Plan.

Housing

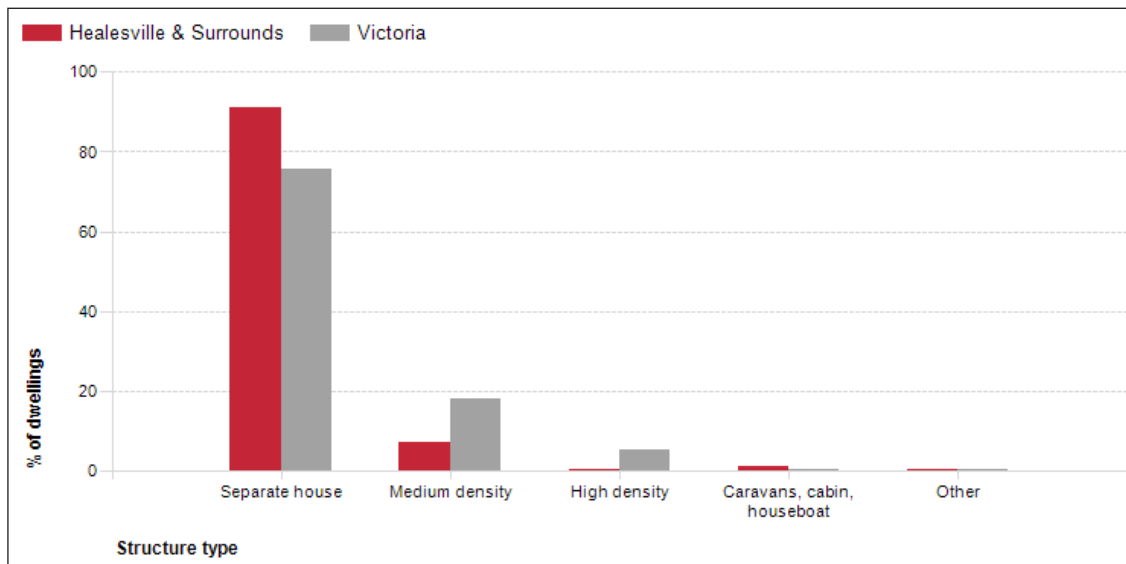
TYPES OF DWELLINGS

In 2011 there were 4166 private dwellings in the Healesville area. Over the past twenty years 1,222 dwellings have been added to the building stock with the years 2006-2011 recording the greatest increase - an extra 617 dwellings.

Most of these dwellings are in the form of separate houses (91.1%) and about half contained three bedrooms. Since 1991 the proportion of medium density housing (villa units and similar) has increased

from 4.9% to 7.3% of the total housing stock. As Figure 8 shows this is much less than the Victorian average of 18.1%, but this increase has contributed to greater housing choice in the Healesville township and is significantly higher than other townships in Yarra Ranges.

Figure 8: Dwelling Type, 2011



Source: Australia Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing

This diversity caters for a range of household types and preferences and provides opportunities for older residents to downsize but remain in the local area as they age. In recent years, due to the size of lots and proximity to services, a significant proportion of this new development has occurred in the Smith Street area to the west of the town centre.

Approximately 20% of all housing in Healesville and Surrounds is made available for rent. Of this, only 3.7% is available as social housing.

The term 'Social housing' refers to either public or community housing. 'Public housing' is defined as dwellings managed by the State housing authority to provide affordable rental accommodation to low income earners. 'Community housing' is rental housing made available for low to moderate income or special needs households, managed by community-based organisations that are, at least partly, subsidised by government.

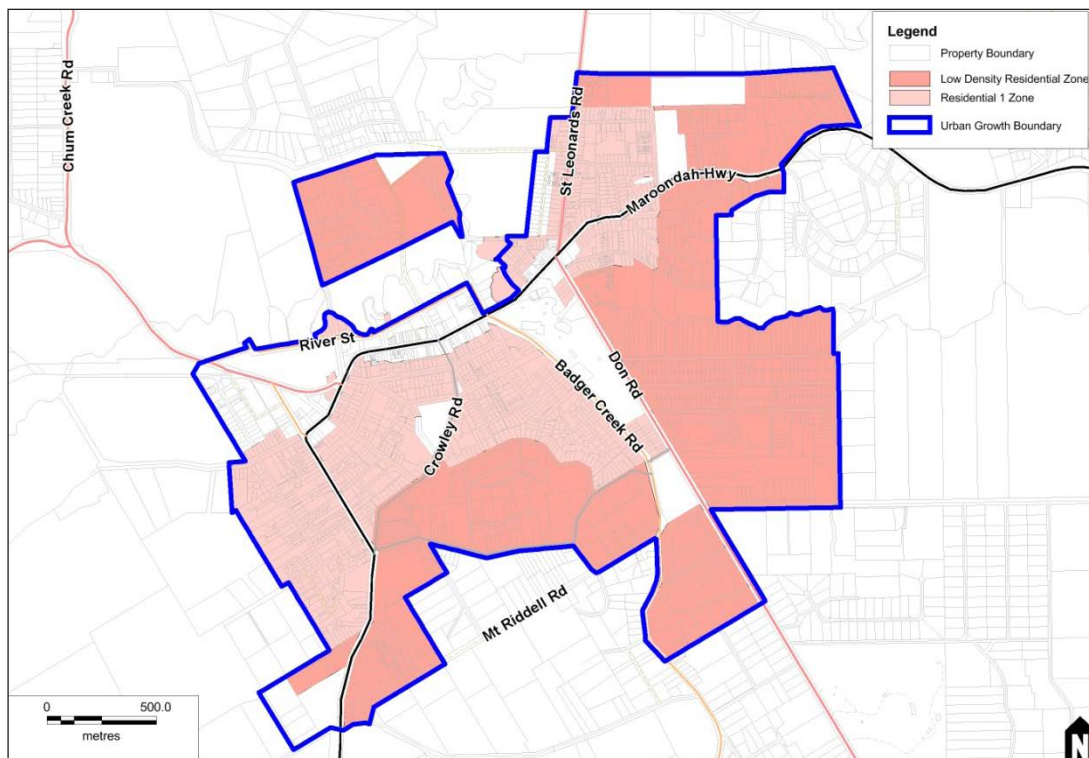
Further information about the housing in Yarra Ranges can be found at www.profile.id.com.au/yarra-ranges

EXISTING PLANNING CONTROLS

Planning Scheme

As Map 4 shows residential land within the Healesville township is in either a Residential 1 or Low Density Residential Zone under the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme.

Map 4: Residential Zones in Healesville Township



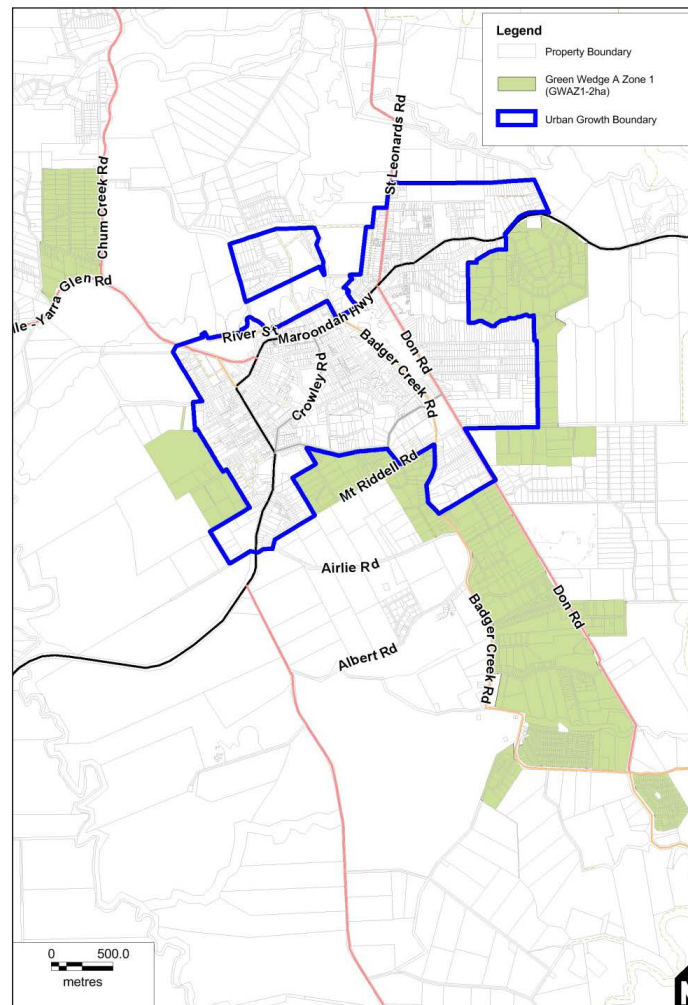
Source: Yarra Ranges Council

The Residential 1 land is located closest to the town centre. This zone is commonly applied to large areas of land in metropolitan Melbourne. In the Residential 1 Zone for Healesville it is policy in the planning scheme that the average size of lots in any new subdivision not be less than 1,000 square metres, except where the proposal complies with policies for medium density housing (villa units and similar).

The land zoned Low Density Residential is generally located further from the town centre. In this zone, the planning scheme specifies that the minimum size of each lot for subdivision purposes is 0.4 hectare.

There are also smaller lot subdivisions just outside the Healesville township (see Map 5). They are zoned either Green Wedge A or Green Wedge. These zones currently preclude most land from being further subdivided.

Map 5: Residential Land Outside Urban Growth Boundary

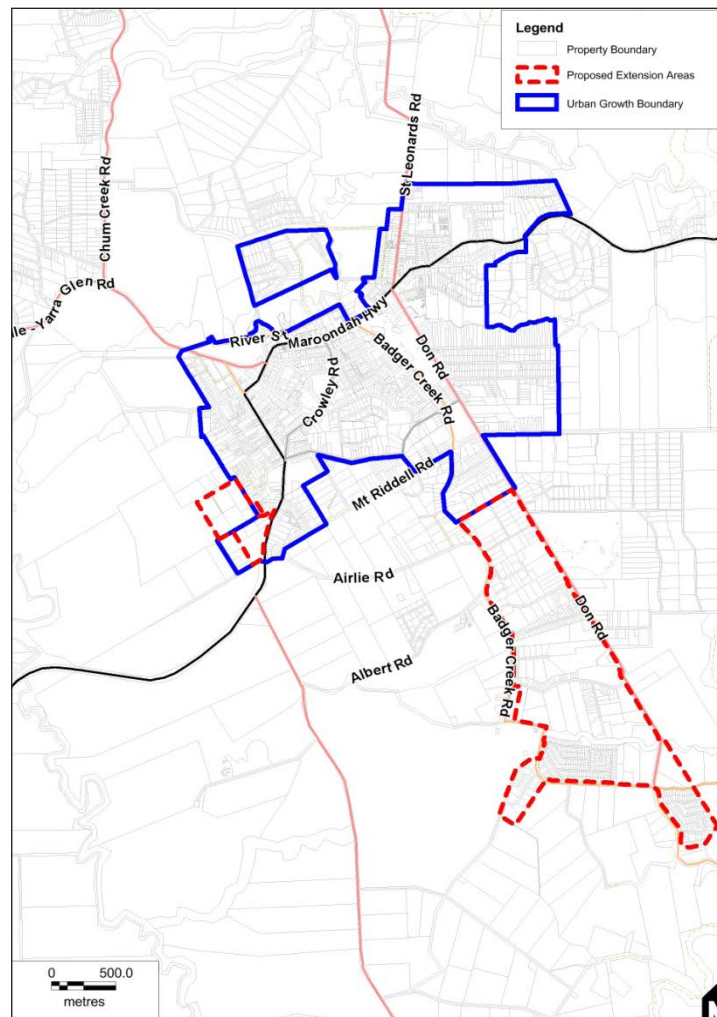


Source: Yarra Ranges Council

Regional Strategy Plan

The Regional Strategy Plan, some years ago, anticipated the need for some limited increase in the provision of housing in Healesville over time. It focuses on land bounded by Badger Creek Road and Don Road and stretching from Maroondah Highway to Badgers Creek and a second area near the intersection of Maroondah Highway and Mt Riddell Road (see Map 6).

Map 6: Extension Areas Proposed by Regional Strategy Plan



Source: Yarra Ranges Council

It proposes that some further development could occur in this area subject to a detailed assessment of all potential impacts of any expansion or increased density, including the availability of services, drainage, vegetation, fire protection and protection of watercourses.

Since the development of the Regional Strategy Plan, State Government policies through the metropolitan green wedge planning controls and the Urban Growth Boundary have strengthened urban containment policies and the protection of the Yarra Ranges Green Wedge from further urban development and the expansion of townships such as Healesville. This position has been supported by Council, most recently through adoption of the Yarra Ranges Council Green Wedge Management Plan in 2010.

More information about the Green Wedge Management Plan can be found on Council's website www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au

RECENT PROJECTS & PROPOSALS

Housing Strategy and Amendment

The Yarra Ranges Housing Strategy was adopted by Council in 2010. It included an analysis of all residential areas and the potential for future growth. Healesville was identified as one of the locations where some future growth within existing residential areas could be accommodated.

One of the key actions identified in the Housing Strategy was the preparation of a planning scheme amendment intended to direct future housing growth while protecting neighbourhood character. The Amendment (C97) was exhibited in 2010 and considered by a Planning Panel appointed by the Minister for Planning in 2011. It has now been submitted to the Minister for Planning for approval.

The Amendment proposes to place residential land into one of the following:

Consolidation areas - preferred locations for higher density residential development. The proposed planning controls encourage lot consolidation to achieve better design and layout outcomes.

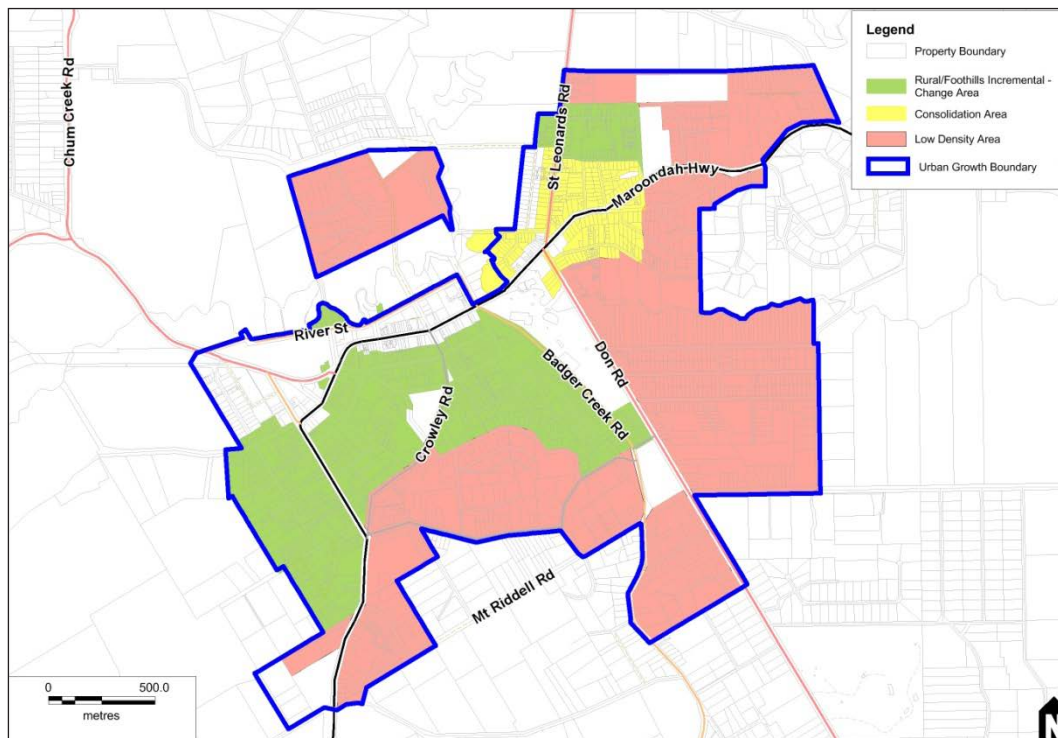
Incremental change areas - areas where some infill development is expected and encouraged to diversify housing stock. In some parts of the Healesville incremental change area there is significant vegetation and a more spacious form of development will be maintained by the proposed controls.

Least change areas - generally contain significant vegetation, are in relatively remote locations, with limited services and may be subject to environmental constraints such as a higher fire risk. These areas are generally at the outer periphery of residential neighbourhoods and have been identified as areas where further development is not considered sustainable.

The Amendment does not propose any changes to the Low Density Residential Zone.

Both Consolidation and Incremental Change areas are proposed for Healesville. No Least Change Areas are proposed. The proposed changes are shown in Map 7.

Map 7: Proposed Housing Amendment Changes



Source: Yarra Ranges Council

While some zone changes are proposed in the Amendment, these may change due to new zones being proposed by the State Government.

More information about the Housing Strategy and Amendment C97 can be found on Council's website www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au

More information about the new zones proposed by the State Government can be found at www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning.

Housing Issues

Housing has become less affordable in Australia in recent years. In Melbourne house prices have risen substantially. For many households, the amount of household income left after paying for housing costs has significantly decreased. Rental properties are scarce resulting in an increasing demand for supported housing, including emergency accommodation. There is also some evidence that homelessness is increasing in the municipality. Further analysis of how this trend impacts on Healesville is needed.

As indicated earlier, the largest increasing household type in Healesville is lone person households and this trend is set to continue over the next 20 years. These demographic changes result in changing housing needs that are not always being met.

While there has been a moderate increase the proportion of medium density housing available in Healesville, the majority of houses are single detached 3-4 bedroom dwellings, which leaves limited opportunity to cater for different housing choices. Similarly, the number of older people living in Healesville is increasing and this is likely to place additional needs for aged care accommodation such as retirement villages. However, increasing housing densities in established areas is not easy and in some cases not desirable particularly if an area is lacking in infrastructure or has valued residential character or significant vegetation.

Healesville's population has remained relatively stable over the past 10-15 years. This is mainly due to the long held urban containment policies that prevent additional rural land from being developed for residential housing and the current extent of the Low Density Residential zoning that prevents subdivision of lots below 4000 square metres. The current land use zonings and policies have maintained the township boundaries and the current subdivision patterns we see today.

Key issues that the structure plan needs to examine include how best to manage housing needs into the future. Should additional housing opportunities be provided to support greater housing choices and to assist in people aging in place. If additional housing is required where should this housing go and what form should it take. Other questions include whether Healesville should expand and if so by how much?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What do you value about Healesville township's residential areas?
- How does the rising cost of housing impact on your family or community?
- Does housing in Healesville cater well for all members of the community? What is needed?
- Should there be more medium density housing (villa unit and similar)? Where should they be built?
- Is enough being done to allow people to age in place?
- Should some limited further subdivision to allow smaller lots be allowed in Healesville's current Low Density Residential areas? Which area, in particular?
- Is there some land just outside the Urban Growth Boundary that might be more suitable for further subdivision for housing or should the current township Urban Growth Boundary remain in place?
- Is there a need for additional aged persons accommodation? What type is needed and where should it be located?
- Are you aware of other housing related needs that should be considered in the Structure Planning process?

Business

LOCATION AND ROLE

Healesville is located at the base of the forested areas of the Great Dividing Range and at the eastern edge of the open rural farming areas of the Yarra Valley. As the largest rural township in Yarra Ranges, Healesville provides a range of retail, professional and business services to cater for residents and business owners. It also acts as a service centre for the surrounding communities.

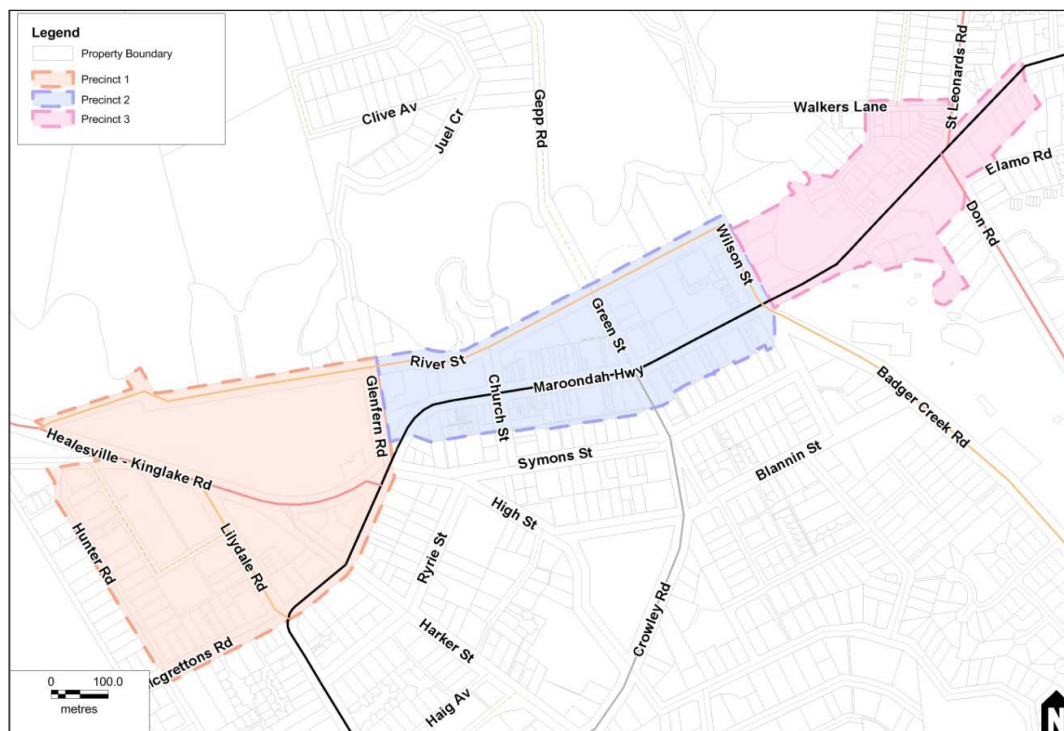
The town is also a major visitor destination. It is located centrally in the Yarra Valley grape growing region and offers a wide range of attractions and facilities, including one of Victoria's premier tourist attractions: Healesville Sanctuary.

TOWN CENTRE

The town centre is anchored by a Coles supermarket (3,070m²) and also includes a range of specialty retailers, mainly with a focus on convenience retailing and the visitor market, as illustrated by the presence of a number of café/restaurants and boutiques. Only 5% of shopfront commercial floorspace is vacant, which is within the range of 4-6% considered to be typical for a healthy strip-based centre.

The town centre can be divided into three precincts as shown in Map 8.

Map 8: Town Centre Precincts



Source: Yarra Ranges Council

Precinct One - the western part of the centre includes public use facilities such as the Healesville Railway Station and tourist facilities, community facilities such as Liberty Family Church and Lions Hall, and industrial uses. This precinct is separated from Precinct Two by the change in road alignment of Maroondah Highway.

Precinct Two - the central part of the centre accommodates a range of commercial premises including shops, food and drink premises, banks and hairdressers. Other uses include the Coles supermarket, the VicForests office, The Memo (Memorial Hall) and Queens Park. The Watts River provides a natural division between Precincts Two and Three. The Healesville Community Market is held in Precinct Two on the first Sunday of every month. The Healesville Organic Farmers' Market operates from Coronation Park every Saturday morning.

Precinct Three - the eastern part of the centre comprises, among other uses, the Returned Services League and a strip shopping centre on the north side of Maroondah Highway and a winery, a microbrewery, a large bakery and café on the south side.

The surrounding area is home to a number of significant tourist attractions including Healesville Sanctuary, Healesville Racecourse, Maroondah Reservoir, the RACV Country Club, Hedgend Maze and Tarrawarra Museum of Art. The township is also a tourist destination for agricultural produce and wine. A motel and over 40 bed and breakfast businesses operate in the area.

INDUSTRY

The Hunter Road industrial area is the main hub of industrial activity in Healesville and contains 7.2 hectares of land. Existing industrial development is concentrated in Hunter Street, which contains mostly small scale industrial buildings, catering for a mix of businesses that mainly service the local community. This area experienced significant growth between 1998 and 2004, with 12 properties totalling 1.5 hectares being developed.

Opportunities for further industrial development in the precinct are generally limited to a 1.8 hectare, 19 lot parcel, under single-ownership, located on the north-eastern side of the precinct. A former timber processing factory and a bus depot occupy part of the site. The balance of the precinct is occupied by several non industrial activities, including a squash court/leisure centre and a hall.

Future expansion of this industrial area is limited by the Urban Growth Boundary to the west, existing residential and commercial land to the south and east, and a planned tourist-oriented precinct around the Healesville Railway Station to the north.

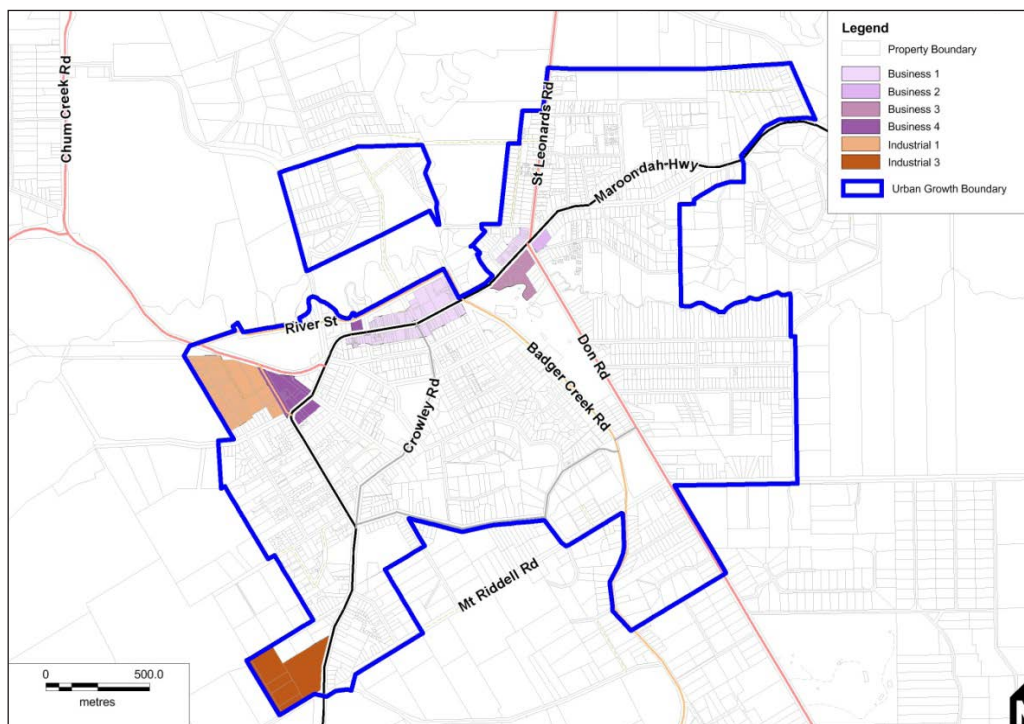
A second industrial area at the western gateway to the township has direct frontage to the Maroondah Highway and is also bounded by Heritage Lane and Argoon Road. It comprises approximately 7 hectares of land. The precinct is largely undeveloped and includes the former sawmill site of 3.8 hectares, which is unoccupied and contains mostly cleared land. The balance of the precinct comprises three land holdings with low intensity development, including an SES Depot.

The potential further industrial development is focussed on the former sawmill site, as expansion of industrial land beyond the precinct is constrained by the Urban Growth Boundary, Maroondah Highway and low-density residential properties which have been developed in the surrounds. In addition, the role of this precinct as a ‘gateway’ to Healesville may also inhibit the future development of the precinct as a major industrial location. The remaining sites contain limited site coverage of buildings and may offer longer term potential for more intensive redevelopment.

EXISTING PLANNING SCHEME

Within the township the majority of business premises are located within the Business 1, Industrial 1 or Industrial 3 zones as shown in Map 9.

Map 9: Business and Industrial Zones



Source: Yarra Ranges Council

A Design and Development Overlay ensures that any development on the former sawmill site will respect its visually prominent location at the eastern gateway to the township.

The Green Wedge zones located outside the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) provides mainly for agricultural and rural lifestyle uses with opportunities for some agricultural linked tourism related activities.

There are two large properties zoned ‘Special Use’ just outside the UGB on the southern entrance to Healesville along Maroondah Highway. These sites allow for specific tourism related developments.

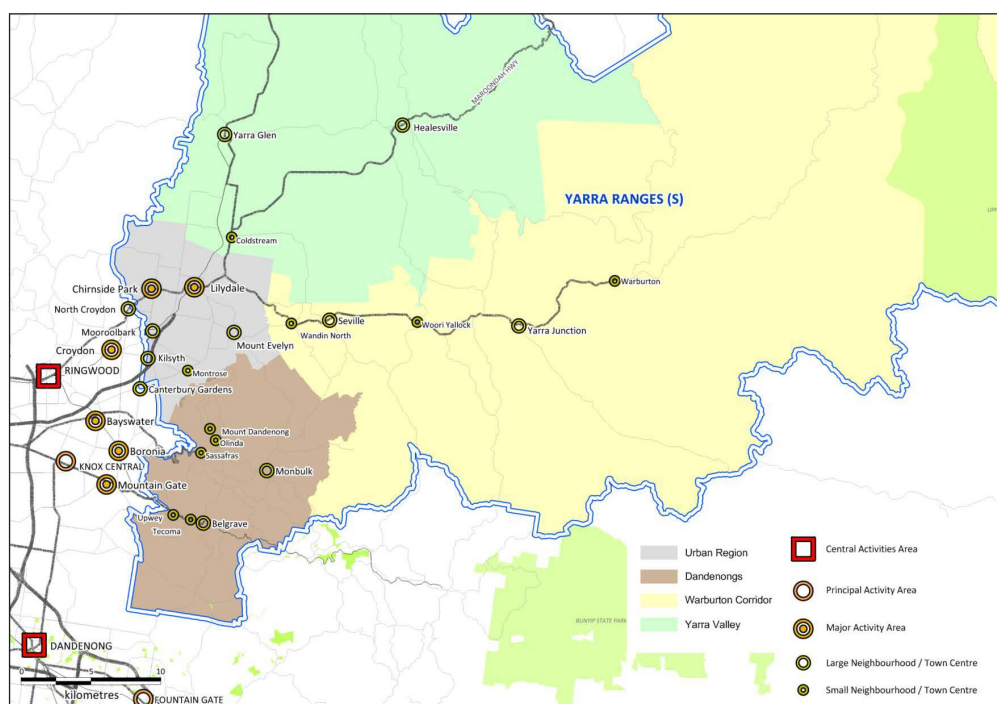
RECENT PROJECTS AND PROPOSALS

Activity Centre Network Strategy

A draft Activity Centre Network Strategy for the municipality has been recently prepared by economists, Essential Economics, for Council. It identifies the proposed role and function of each of the Yarra Ranges activity centres to ensure that any new development will improve the level of services, facilities and employment opportunities across the network of activity centres in Yarra Ranges.

The Strategy is based on a comprehensive analysis of Yarra Ranges' activity centres, including Healesville, and incorporates a retail, commercial and industrial land supply and demand analysis. It identifies opportunities and actions that can be undertaken to improve the overall performance of the network of activity centres in Yarra Ranges, thus meeting both the present and future needs of the community.

Map 10: Yarra Ranges Activity Centre Network



Source: Activity Centre Network Strategy, Essential Economics

The Strategy identifies a hierarchy of activity centres which comprise:

- Major Activities Areas
- Large Neighbourhood Activities Areas / Town Centres
- Small Neighbourhood Activity Areas / Town Centres
- Local Centres.

Healesville has been identified as a Large Town Centre. At the same time, it is recognised that a significant proportion of grocery and convenience-based retailing is undertaken at Lilydale and Chirnside Park. Journey to work patterns contribute to the flow of retail spending away from Healesville with residents undertaking shopping in centres convenient to their workplace.

It also notes that most shopping for higher-order retail merchandise (non-food retail) is undertaken at Chirnside Park, Lilydale and centres located beyond Yarra Ranges, including Ringwood, Knox and Melbourne CBD.

Community consultation on the draft Strategy was recently concluded and Council will consider the submissions shortly. If adopted by Council, a planning scheme amendment to incorporate the Strategy will be prepared.

The draft Activity Centre Network Strategy can be viewed at www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ISSUES

Specific recommendations identified by the Activity Centre Network Strategy report for Healesville are:

- Investigate opportunities to improve the integration of the different components of the centre, including the eastern and western parts; the tourist-related development in the eastern part (ie. Beechworth Bakery, White Rabbit Brewery and Innocent Bystander) and Queens Park; and the pedestrian linkages between the tourist-related development in the eastern part on either side of Maroondah Highway.
- Investigate the potential for expansion of supermarket facilities; tourist-related retail in the form of cafes, restaurant and speciality shops; and visitor accommodation.
- Investigate the potential for the hardware building supplies site on the corner of Maroondah Highway and Church Street (175 Maroondah Highway) and the French's laundry site (265-269 Maroondah Highway) adjacent to the Healesville Walk Shopping Centre as future development sites.

In the Industrial Areas, the former sawmill site (17-25 Maroondah Highway) has been the subject of substantial interest from developers. A planning permit application (Application No YR2012/481) for a service station, takeaway food premises, convenience restaurants, a car wash, an epicurean centre, two self-storage facilities and a hotel is currently considered by Council. If this development does not proceed, what alternative use and development is desirable?

In addition, is there a need for more land in the township to be zoned for industrial purposes?

Council recently updated its Economic Development Strategy which recognises the importance of economic activity in maintaining community wellbeing. It emphasises the need for economic development initiatives to respond to the challenges of a low carbon future as communities transition to non-fossil fuelled based energy. Key challenges include a need to embrace sustainability, ensure innovation and adoption of new information communication technologies such as high speed broadband.

Council's Economic Development Strategy encourages further development of the region's tourism sector. Healesville is well positioned to capitalise on a growing tourism industry such as providing additional visitor accommodation that will encourage visitors to lengthen their stay not only Healesville but in the region. The Strategy emphasises the need to ensure tourism is sustainable, providing benefits to local residents such as employment opportunities and that development of tourism is balanced with environmental and cultural and heritage values. Has Healesville got the balance right? What major economic issues are facing Healesville? How can we encourage more local employment opportunities?

The Special Use Zone has been applied to a number of properties in the broader Healesville area. The purpose of the Special Use Zone is to recognise or provide for specific and often large scale, developments where the range of uses to be accommodated may not fit within the provisions of the existing zoning in an area.

Current properties in the study area that are located in a Special Use Zone include:

- 15 Healesville-Kooweerup Rd & 16 Airlie Rd, Healesville (Former strawberry farm)
- 11 Maroondah Highway, Healesville (Proposed Healesville Mandarin)
- 140 Healesville-Yarra Glen Road, Healesville (Mt Rael)
- 20-24 Glen Eadie Avenue, Badger Creek (Healesville Sanctuary)

In some cases, such as the Healesville Sanctuary, this zone provides flexibility for a significant and dedicated land use that has operated viably for many years. For other properties, circumstances may have changed and landowners may wish to explore alternative planning scheme provisions that reflect their current situation and/or future plans. Council's Green Wedge Management Plan recommended a review of the provisions of the Special Use Zone as a number of these sites remain undeveloped and the current development allowed for may no longer be appropriate.

There are also properties in the Green Wedge Zone that are used for a large scale purposes where the current planning controls may not provide sufficient flexibility and scope. Two potential properties include the Healesville RACV Club and the Healesville Racecourse.

The two large parcels described below were previously used for a specific purpose but that use has now ceased, and it is beneficial to review the current zoning.

Cnr Albert Road & Glen Eadie Road, Healesville/Badger Creek (Commonwealth land - formerly Army School of Health).

20-24 Glen Eadie Avenue, Badger Creek (Formerly Galeena Beek Community & Cultural Centre).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Does Healesville town centre have all the shops and services you would expect in a township of its size? What's missing?
- Should the numbers of a particular type of business be increased so there is more choice in Healesville?
- Are there types of businesses you think could work well and should be attracted to the area?
- Do you support a small increase in the size of the commercial area of Healesville?
- If the commercial area of Healesville were to be extended, where should the additional businesses be located?
- Is there any need to make more land available for industry?
- Do you have any views about what the key redevelopment sites identified in this Discussion Paper should be used for?
- How can Healesville encourage sustainable development opportunities and increase local employment?
- Does the tourist focus of the town cause any specific problems for you?
- What changes to the physical environment of Healesville would support your business?
- What changes to service provision in Healesville would support your business?
- Are there changes to the land use zonings that could lead to better planning outcomes and increased sustainable development opportunities?

Heritage, Built Form & Public Spaces

HERITAGE

The area around Healesville was originally occupied by the Wurrundjeri peoples. In 1863, the 2300 acre (930 hectares) Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve was established as a protectorate for the original habitants. The indigenous residents developed a thriving farming community, which soon became self sufficient.

The township initially developed in conjunction with the construction of a road from Melbourne to the gold diggings at Woods Point and beyond. With the ongoing improvement of the roads, Cobb & Co established a coach service from Healesville over the Black Spur in the late 1870s.

By the 1880s landowners were putting pressure on the government for access to Coranderrk as the land was highly fertile and in 1886 the government started to integrate the Aboriginal people at Coranderrk into white society. Although the residents protested, Coranderrk was scaled back and by 1924 almost all of the remaining residents were relocated to Lake Tyres, in East Gippsland. Part of the Coranderrk land is now the Healesville sanctuary which was established in the 1920s and in 1998 most of Coranderrk was returned to the Wurundjeri Tribe Land Compensation and Cultural Heritage Council. The Healesville Sanctuary has recently launched eco tours exploring the Coranderrk region and its indigenous cultural heritage.

The arrival of the railway in 1889 from Yarra Glen enabled Healesville to function as a tourist destination and many guest houses were established. The construction of the Upper Yarra Dam in 1927 provided further impetus to the development of the town.



This long history has resulted in a mixed stock of heritage buildings, including hotels, public halls, the railway station, guest houses, dwellings from different eras and heritage trees. The presence of significant heritage buildings makes an important contribution to the character of Healesville.

TOWN CENTRE AND GATEWAYS

The Healesville's town centre, and particularly its main street, is the key public place where the community come together.

The main streetscape is characterised by a range of buildings containing shops and small businesses, many with verandahs and original shopfronts. A number of shops are notable for their age and retention of original features. These buildings are mainly one storey high, and contrast in a pleasing way with a number of the key buildings in the main street, including the Healesville Uniting Church, the Grand Hotel and Healesville Hotel and Memorial Hall (now known as The Memo).

Basalt edged garden beds with low shrubs have been created on the nature strip in the commercial area of Nicholson Street from near the bridge to Church Street. Other pedestrian-friendly features such as circular seating, old-style street lighting and footpath paving have also been added to this section of the streetscape. A distinctive feature of the town centre is the raised footpath and shop fronts which run along the southern side of the street.

The street trees of the main street of Healesville, Nicholson Street (Maroondah Highway), are one of the most distinctive features of the streetscape. Mature elms, planes and some oaks, line the main street, creating shade and a garden atmosphere. They form an almost continuous visual line, on the eastern side of the road, from the corner of Manse Street to the bend in Nicholson Street just before the corner of High Street. On the western (or river) side of the road, the trees begin near The Memo (Memorial Hall) and form a similar continuous visual line to the area around the corner of Nicholson Street and Glenfern Road. The street trees continue through the township, although with some gaps, up to Crowley Road.

These plantings reinforce the traditional and rural character of the township. They are recognised for their heritage values in the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme.

Major gateways to the town are from the Maroondah Highway from the east and west and from the north-west along the Healesville-Yarra Glen Road. The western approaches are through the attractive open landscapes of the Upper Yarra Valley while the eastern approach is through the spectacular mountain ash forests of the Black Spur.

RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

The main active open spaces for Healesville are Queens Park and the Don Road Recreation Reserve and showgrounds.

Queen's Park is located at the corner of Don Road and Maroondah Highway. It features a mix of mature native and exotic trees and a wide range of sport and social recreation opportunities, including picnic and barbecue facilities, a playground, an outdoor swimming pool, a sports oval, tennis courts, skate and BMX facilities and walking and cycling trails.

The Don Road Recreation Reserve is a regional level sports reserve. There are two sports grounds, two pavilions, tennis courts, two netball courts, walking trails, old horse stables, open parkland, a lake and helipad. The parkland also provides for social recreation activities such as walking, running, dog walking and play.

Other recreational spaces in Healesville include Coronation Park and the Railway Station Precinct. Coronation Park is a social recreation park and provides extensive green areas between the Watts River and the main retail strip featuring bowling greens, BBQ and picnic facilities. The Railway Station Precinct incorporates the historic Healesville railway station and rail line, which is managed by the Yarra Valley Railway Society, and areas of parkland, including picnic areas.

The Jack Hort Memorial Pool at Healesville High School is also a valuable facility, which is available for community use.

PLANNING CONTROLS

Thirty seven sites and buildings within Healesville and the surrounding area are currently identified as having state, regional or local heritage significance. Within the township, heritage buildings include the Grand Hotel, St Johns Anglican Church, and the Healesville Court House. Historic trees are also protected. In the wider area, listings include Coranderrk Aboriginal Station, Eyton-on-Yarra, Strathvea Guest House and the Yarra Track.

A Design and Development Overlay has been applied to a key site (17-25 Maroondah Highway) at the entry to the township to ensure that any proposed development responds to this prominent site's setting.

RECENT PROJECTS AND PROPOSALS

The Don Road Recreation Reserve & Queens Park Master Plans

Master Plans have recently been developed and adopted by Council for the Don Road Recreation Reserve and Queens Park, with extensive community consultation. They provide a blueprint for improving the reserves so that they better meet the needs of user groups and the community while promoting healthy and active lifestyles.

The master plans include short, medium and long-term development priorities. For the Don Road Recreation Reserve key recommendations are:

- Construct a new soccer and netball pavilion and visitor change rooms for football
- Construct a cross country/fitness trail around the reserve
- Improve the social recreation areas by upgrading picnic/playground area and providing a dog off-lead park
- Development of the “third” oval area as a multipurpose alternative training facility
- Improve the traffic management and car parking.

For Queens Park they include:

- Develop a new playground and bike/traffic training area
- Improve the connectivity throughout the park by establishing a trail network
- Demolish the existing skate park and construct a new skate park near the BMX facility
- Redevelopment of the existing pavilion
- Conduct a feasibility study into a Yarra Valley Aquatic Facility and consider the future of the existing outdoor pool.

The master plans were adopted by Council in September 2012. External funding grants will be sought to implement the master plans over time.

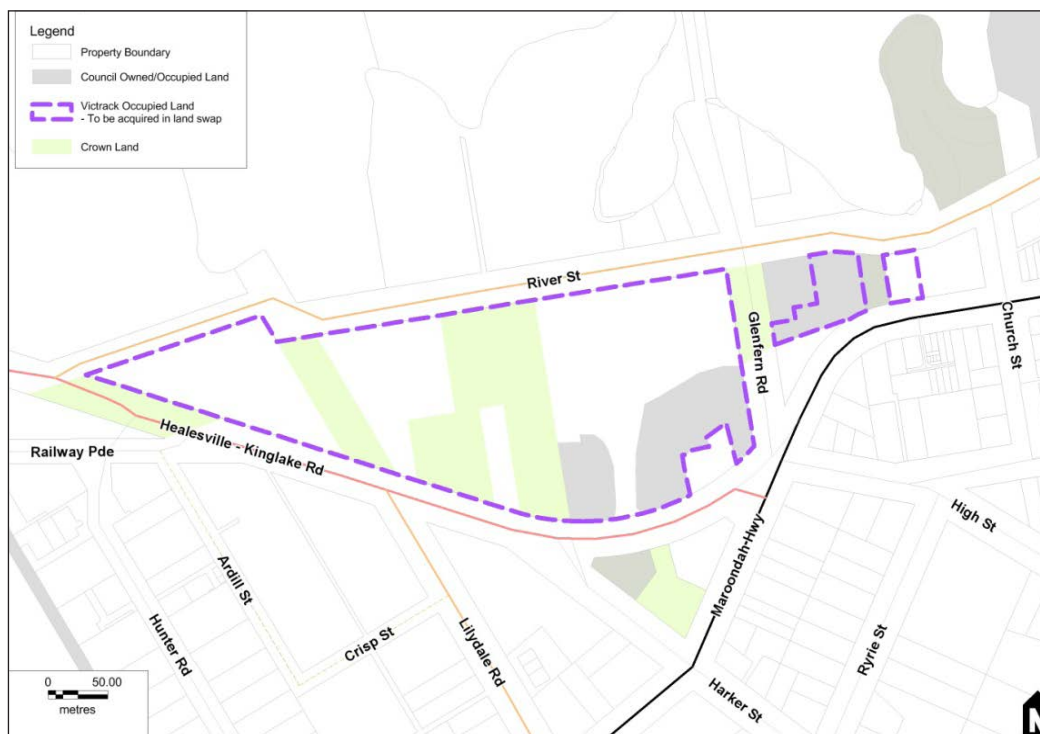
Work on the feasibility study for the aquatic facility has recently commenced along with some community consultation on the proposed skate park design and associated youth artwork project.

The adopted Master Plans can be viewed on Council's website www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au

Land Swap

Council has recently come to an agreement with VicTrack, a state owned rail business, to swap some land in Mooroolbark for land in Healesville. The swap is still being finalised. The land Council will gain in Healesville (see Map 11), has been leased by it and its predecessor for over 40 years and it contains car parking areas and parkland. Some of the land is subject to flooding.

Map 11: Land to be acquired by Yarra Ranges in a Land Swap



Source: Yarra Ranges Council

Although there are a range of options the future use/s of the land have not, as yet, been determined. A 1700 square metre parcel on the corner of River and Green Streets is not part of the proposed land swap and is proposed to be disposed of by VicTrack (for further details refer to Planning Scheme Amendment C108).

Proposed Planning Scheme Amendment – Town Centre Design and Development Overlay

Council has prepared a planning scheme amendment (Amendment C126) to introduce Design and Development Overlays (DDOs) for town centres throughout Yarra Ranges. DDOs identify areas which require the form of development and conditions of future use and development to be managed.

The proposed DDOs will apply in addition to the existing zone controls for town centres but they have been framed in a way that does not increase the number of new developments which will require planning permits.

In preparing the guidelines for the rural townships and settlements three broad town centre categories are identified: Large Rural Township Centres, Smaller Rural Settlement Centres and the Dandenong Ranges Hamlet Centres. Healesville has been identified in the draft Amendment as a Large Rural Town Centre.

The main intent of the new overlays is to provide clearer guidance to applicants and the wider community about the building design considerations that need to be addressed when new developments are proposed in town centres.

These guidelines will build on the design imperatives identified in Vision 2020 by Design (a report prepared by planning consultants, Planisphere, and adopted by Council in 1999). The DDO will focus on key themes including:

- Reinforcing valued characteristics of the town centre that give the locality a unique identity
- Encouraging increased pedestrian activity
- Reinforcing the “main street” as the core of town centre activity
- Improving the ability of town centres to attract trade from the local community and tourists
- Protecting the amenity of residential areas adjoining the town centre.

This Amendment is expected to be exhibited shortly.

Any community input from the Healesville Structure Planning process, which is received prior to the finalisation of the C126 planning scheme amendment process, will be considered in refining the proposed DDOs.

More information about Amendment C126 can be found on Council's website www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au

HERITAGE, BUILT FORM & PUBLIC SPACES ISSUES

Only a small proportion of the buildings in Healesville with potential heritage values have been identified in the planning scheme. Further work is needed to identify whether more properties should be added.

Although work is currently focussed on Queens Park and the Don Road Recreation Reserve, the role of Coronation Park and the Railway Precinct need to be considered, particularly given their proximity to the town centre. This will need to take into account the location of the land within the flood plain. A trail linking the town parks with the town centre and Queens Park would also be desirable to support walkability.

Amendment C126 is intended to guide future development in the town centre but there may also be a need for additional design guidelines to ensure that any development proposed near the entries to the township is of an appropriate design and scale. This has particular relevance to the land identified under the Special Use Zone and the former Sawmill site located at the southern entrance to Healesville along Maroondah Highway. The entrance from Yarra Glen and Chum Creek is also important given the location of significant tourist attractions including the Healesville Racecourse, Yarra Valley Tourist Railway and the RACV Country Club.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What do you value about Healesville's history?
- What buildings and/or places are important to you?
- Should maintaining Healesville's heritage buildings and places be a priority?
- What do you value about the character of Healesville?
- Should there be additional planning controls to guide development?
- Are there any issues with the layout of the town centre?
- Where would you like to see further footpaths and recreation trails?
- What sort of urban design works, such as tree planting, paving or seating, are a priority in the Healesville township?
- Do you have any ideas about the future of open spaces in the Healesville township such as Coronation Park or the Railway Precinct?

Natural Environment

WATERWAYS & CATCHMENT



Healesville is located on the junction of the Watts River and Grace Burn Creek, a short distance upstream from where the Watts River meets the Yarra River. Other watercourses within the Healesville area are the Chum, Myers, Long Gully, Picaninny and Badger Creeks.

The Watts River is largely contained within the forested Maroondah Reservoir water supply catchment. The reaches upstream of the reservoir are considered ecologically healthy. Tributaries of Watts River include Donnelly's and New Chum creeks. Donnelly's Creek along with the upper parts of New Chum Creek, has very high environmental values due to undisturbed forested catchments.

The headwaters of Graceburn and Badger creeks are also in forested water supply catchments where environmental values are high and the reaches have been defined as ecologically healthy.

Badger Creek is of high Aboriginal significance due to its connection with the Coranderrk Aboriginal Mission and the historical weir on Badger Creek is of European cultural importance. The weir poses a significant risk to native fish, preventing migration upstream and downstream.

Downstream of the forested areas, the condition of the waterways decline and there are very limited natural vegetation remnants along the waterways within the Healesville township. This severely limits their function as habitat corridors and reduced flows and poor water quality result.

Despite this, the Watts River, Grace Burn Creek and Badger Creek provide important breeding habitat for platypus, which are reasonably abundant and widespread within these systems.

FLORA & FAUNA

Vegetation in the township and surrounds is made up of ecological vegetation classes (EVCs) common to the Central Highlands of Victoria. EVCs are the basic mapping units used for biodiversity planning and conservation assessment at landscape, regional and broader scales in Victoria.

Some EVCs located in the town and surrounding area, such as Swampy Riparian Woodland, have been identified as an endangered vegetation class. Swampy riparian woodlands are located along creek lines and are mostly degraded through the impacts of rural and residential development and weed invasion.

The public and private land outside of the town boundaries contains forested areas which support important and diverse habitats for significant flora and fauna such as Leadbeaters Possum, large forest owls, Tree Goanna, Brush Tailed Phascogale, Cool Temperate Rainforest, Matted Flax Lily and Creeping Grevillea.

The residential and industrial areas of Healesville contain some remnant vegetation, which provides an indication of the past vegetation as well as providing habitat for local native wildlife. Threatened flora species that are regularly encountered in the urban area are Green Scentbark and the nationally threatened Matted Flax Lily (*Dianella aemula*).

On some steep sections of land within the township there is an extensive cover of canopy trees. Cool Temperate Rainforests can be found in the forested gullies surrounding the township where fire has been excluded for centuries.

Green Scentbark Herb-rich Foothill Forest is a restricted vegetation community that occurs in the foothills of Healesville. Green Scentbark (*Eucalyptus fulgens*) is a tree that grows to 20 metres tall, with dark, furrowed bark. The species is endemic to Victoria and is listed as rare, being known from only a few populations, most of which occur within the Yarra Ranges.

The Lowes Road area contains a large population of Creeping Grevillea (*Grevillea repens*), while Toolangi contains Round-leaf Pomaderris (*Pomaderris vacciniifolia*), a medium size bush. Both are only found in Victoria in very small, localised populations.

The Healesville Sanctuary and Coranderrk Bushland area contains areas of open forest, woodland and heathland and which supports wetland habitats, including those associated with Lake Coranderrk and Picaninny Pond. It is managed both as a conservation reserve and as an area for scientific study. Vegetation is extremely diverse for its size and includes rare stands of Green Scentbark.

This vegetation in turn supports a large diversity of wildlife. Two recorded mammal species found here, which have a threatened conservation status in Victoria are the vulnerable Large-footed Myotis (*Myotis macropus*), from the bat family and the Brush-tailed Phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*), a rat sized marsupial. Another species of significance is the Lace Monitor (*Varanus varius*), a member of the lizard family.

The uncleared private land in the southern section of Paul Range – to the west of Kinglake Healesville Road – contains areas of more mature forest than generally occur in the State Forest to the north. It provides opportunities for nest sites for large owls, including the Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*).

LANDSCAPE

The scenic landscape setting of Healesville is a key factor in the township's popularity for new residents and tourists.

The township can be characterised as residential pockets set within a broader, rural and forested areas. The southern and western entrances to the town are predominately agricultural and the northern and eastern ends give way to tall forests and mountainous country. Within the township gardens are generally suburban in nature with a mixture of mature native and exotic vegetation. There are frequent views between buildings to the surrounding rural landscape.

The Upper Yarra river landscape extends from the broad flood plains south of Yarra Glen and Healesville to the confined valley at the base of the Donna Buang Range near Warburton. The flood plain areas are generally cleared and used for broadscale grazing and have an open rural character which is dominated by the backdrop of mountains to the north and east.

Another significant landscape is to the east of the township along the Maroondah Highway. The Black Spur landscape consists of many kilometres of winding road along a section of the Maroondah Highway north east of Healesville. The road is an important tourist route and is one of the major gateways to the municipality. It provides a significant visual experience, derived from driving through a magnificent forest, including sections of tall Mountain Ash forest.

EXISTING PLANNING CONTROLS

Privately owned forested areas mainly to the north of the township are zoned Rural Conservation. The Public Conservation and Resource Zone recognises smaller parcels of land in public ownership with conservation values. A large area of land to the west of the township zoned Public Use protects the catchment of the Maroondah dam.

Extensive areas of the land surrounding the township are included in the Bushfire Management Overlay (formerly called Wildfire Management Overlay). The Erosion Management Overlay identifies small areas of land scattered around the township which are susceptible to landslip.

The Environmental Significance Overlay identifies and protects significant vegetation. It has been applied to the Healesville Sanctuary and Coranderrk Bushland area, the Lowes Road area and land to the west of Healesville-Kinglake Road. The Significant Landscape Overlay protects the special landscapes to the east and west of the township. Clause 53 of the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme provides vegetation controls for vegetation over 5 metres in height.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND LANDSCAPE ISSUES

Healesville like many towns on the edge of a large city faces a range of broader and local environmental challenges. These include impacts associated with global warming and climate change to more local threats such as incremental habitat loss as a result of vegetation removal, pest plant and animals and increased pollution in waterways. All these pressures have a cumulative impact on local biodiversity and on the landscape.

Healesville's location also means that many parts of the town and surrounding hinterland are prone to bushfire as was evident in the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires. This event and the subsequent findings of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission highlight the importance of considering the threat of bushfire in high fire risk areas such as Healesville when undertaking any land use planning strategy.

Despite the environmental pressures, Healesville provides an enviable local environment with rich habitats of forested mountains and important waterways, as well as vegetation remnants within the town. If we are to retain and enhance these environmental values decisions need to be made about how best to protect remnant vegetation, encourage more sustainable living and building design, improve land management practices and increase weed control and revegetation programs.

From a structure planning perspective key issues include whether current planning controls are effective in protecting and enhancing these valued environmental assets. For example what additional measures should be taken to protect and improve the environs of the local waterways?

How do we balance the need to protect remnant vegetation and ensure appropriate bushfire protection measures are implemented?

If limited additional residential development is to occur in the township, what matters should be considered and where should this growth occur?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What do you value about the local Healesville environment and landscape?
- What are the priority projects for natural environmental protection/enhancement in the Healesville area?
- Is environmental sustainability important to you? What actions are a priority in Healesville?
- What are the key environmental challenges facing Healesville and what can be done about it?

Community Facilities & Services

CURRENT FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Healesville and the surrounding towns are serviced by a broad range of facilities and associated services.

Educational facilities include a childcare centre, a kindergarten, public primary schools, a secondary school, a Catholic college, an aboriginal college and a 'living and learning' centre.

A health precinct at the western end of the township includes Healesville & District Hospital, Yarra Valley Community Health and Monda Lodge residential aged care hostel.

The central community precinct, includes The Memo (Memorial Hall), a library and a Council Community Link office.

Other important community facilities include a recovery and waste transfer station and a local Country Fire Authority station. Private facilities include medical centres and five churches.

A number of important community service organisations operate within Healesville. They include:

- Healesville Inter-church Community Care (HICCI) - emergency relief, financial counselling and practical care to the community in times of crisis or need
- Healesville Indigenous Community Service Association (HICSA) - information, services and programs that are focused on building a healthy, strong and skilled community
- Rivendell - a recovery focused, community mental health program
- Healesville Salvation Army – emergency relief, drop in and pastoral care
- Melba Program, Wesley Victoria – frail aged day care and a friendly visitor program.

There are also many other active community groups including Healesville Environmental Watch, Healesville Action Group, Community 3777, Rotary and Lions.

RECENT PROJECTS AND PROPOSALS

Healesville Cultural Community Precinct



A Healesville Cultural Community Precinct was recently created by redeveloping the former Healesville Shire Offices and Memorial Hall as a community and cultural centre which is now known as “The Memo”.

It comprises:

- A 300 seat performing arts centre, including a theatre, foyers and backstage facilities
- Exhibition space and an art gallery
- New premises for the library and the historical society
- Council Youth Services facilities and youth spaces
- Council Service Centre and Centre Management
- Various meeting and function rooms.

Healesville & District Hospital Proposal

Surgical services would be removed from Healesville and District Hospital under plan proposed by Eastern Health.

The draft strategic clinical service plan 2012-22 recommends a number of changes at the hospital, including moving surgical services (predominantly short-stay procedures and endoscopies) to Yarra Ranges Health in Lilydale and other sites based on a review of projected population changes and service use data.

The Plan suggests that by removing these services, the Hospital could deliver other more frequently used services, including renal dialysis for people with chronic kidney disease and more inpatient medical care of adults.

It also proposes that ante-natal and post-natal services, mental health services as well as the introduction of specialists in cardiology, diabetes, gastroenterology, respiratory and pain management be introduced.

Eastern Health held a community consultation meeting on the draft plan on 10 December 2012.

More information about the proposed changes to the hospital's services can be found at www.easternhealth.org.au/eh2022.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Does Healesville town centre have all the health and community services you would expect in a township of its size? What's missing?
- What are the priority services that need to be attracted to/retained in the town?
- Should the development of more seniors housing and/or aged care facilities be encouraged in the area?
- What would help Healesville to remain a resilient community that is able to absorb shocks from events such as petrol price hikes, bushfires or climate change impacts?
- What additional education opportunities would you like to see provided in the township?
- Is there any further action Council could take which would support greater employment opportunities?

Physical Infrastructure

A more detailed assessment of the capacity of available infrastructure will be undertaken as part of the preparation of the Future Directions Paper that follows this Discussion Paper. The following provides some background information and a brief overview of the current situation.

Electricity, gas and water

Mains electricity, gas and water are available to the township. The relevant government authorities are Multinet Gas for gas, SP AusNet for electricity and Yarra Valley Water for water and sewerage.

Telecommunications

A number of major providers, including Telstra and Optus, offer both fixed and mobile communication options in Healesville.

A broadband internet connection is increasingly required for accessing essential information and undertaking domestic and non-domestic business.

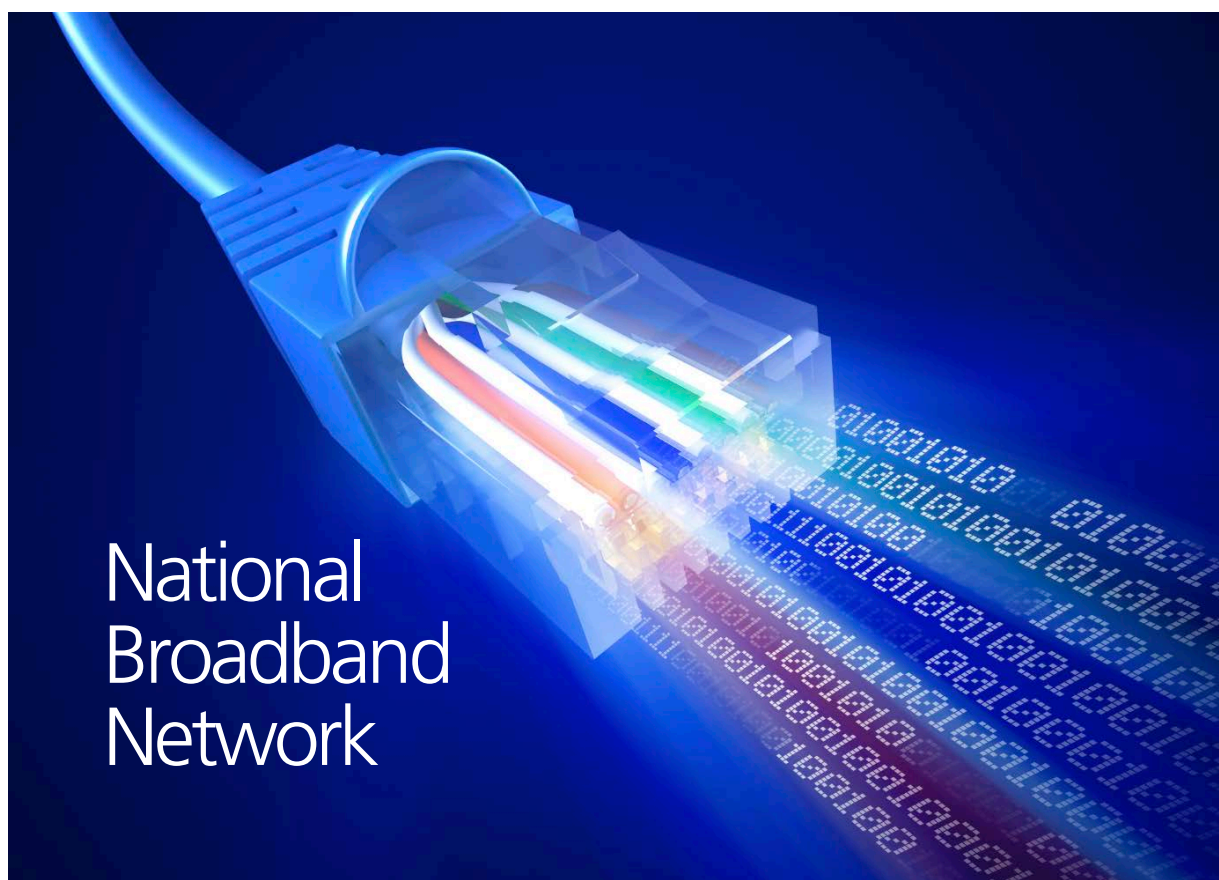
Broadband connection in Healesville increased significantly from 30.8% in 2006 Census to 66.1% in 2011. This is a greater increase than that for Victoria, which increased from 38.6% in 2006 to 67.6% in 2011.

Drainage & Flooding

Melbourne Water and Council each have responsibilities for managing the township's drainage system. Melbourne Water, as a regional drainage authority, is responsible for providing a safe level of flood protection for the community.

The capacity of drainage systems across metropolitan Melbourne and surrounding townships, such as Healesville, to cope with stormwater varies, generally according to the age of the drainage. Before the late 1970s, most drainage systems were designed to contain stormwater from a 5-year storm event. After major flooding in the early 1970s, the Victorian Government introduced the Drainage of Land Act in 1975. Subdivisions developed after that date had to safely handle overland flows from a 100-year storm event. There is no legal requirement for Melbourne Water, Councils or private landowners to upgrade drainage in place prior to 1975.

In Healesville, Melbourne Water has identified significant areas of land along the Yarra River and its tributaries as being subject to flooding and there has been clear evidence of this in recent years.



National Broadband Network

Recent projects and proposals

The National Broadband Network (NBN) is to be rolled out to a number of Yarra Ranges localities, including Healesville, commencing December 2013. The network comprises of three technologies: optic fibre, fixed wireless and next-generation satellite. It is intended to provide more reliable, high-speed broadband access to all Australians.

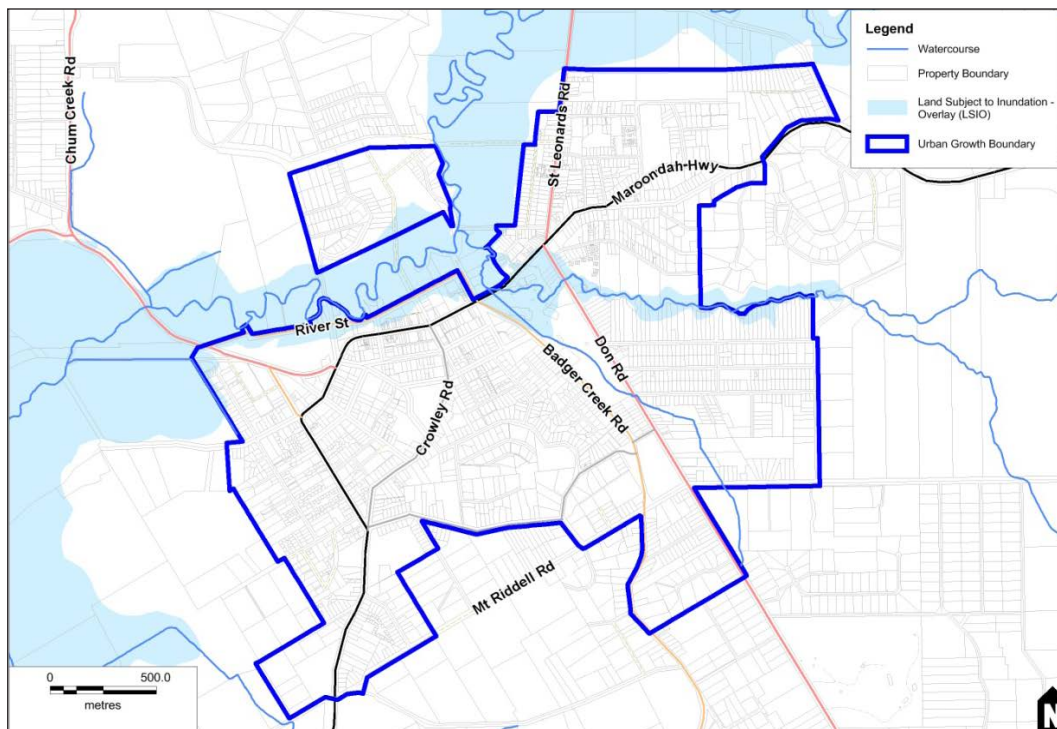
Areas such as aged and health care, emergency services, tourism, manufacturing and the creative professions are some of the industry sectors whose business models could completely evolve through adopting the technology change that is supported by NBN.

More information about the National Broadband Network can be found at www.nbn.gov.au

Existing Zoning

Melbourne Water has identified significant areas of land along the Yarra River and its tributaries within the Healesville township as being subject to flooding. A Land Subject to Inundation Overlay has been applied to the land as shown in Map 12 below.

Map 12: Land Subject to Inundation Overlay



Source: Yarra Ranges Council

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Do water, sewerage, gas and electricity services meet domestic and business needs?
- Are there any issues with existing telecommunications in the Healesville area?
- What advantages will be had with the introduction of the National Broadband Network?
- Are there any problems with septic tanks in Healesville?
- Are there any drainage issues in the township in addition to the flood areas identified in the planning scheme?

Transport, Movement & Parking

ROADS, CAR PARKING AND MOVEMENT NETWORK

Healesville is located on the Maroondah Highway, which links it from metropolitan Melbourne to the Yarra Valley and beyond. Other roads in the Healesville area designated by VicRoads as main roads are Don Road, Badger Creek Road, Healesville Kinglake Road and Healesville-Yarra Glen Road.

Traffic lights are installed at the following intersections:

- Maroondah Highway/Crowley Road-Green St
- Maroondah Highway/Don Road
- Maroondah Highway/St Leonards Road.

On-street car parking is available along most streets located within the town centre, including the Maroondah Highway, with a mixture of short and long-term spaces being provided.

There is off-street parking adjacent to River Street to the rear of the Memo (Memorial Hall) on Council owned land and a further off-street parking area on VicTrack land near the corner of Green Street.

There are also large car parks around the town centre associated with private developments, including the development which contains the Coles supermarket and the car park adjacent to Beechworth Bakery.

New footpaths are generally built in Yarra Ranges beside major roads, where the pedestrian numbers are greater. Priority for their construction is determined based on the needs within the area and safety considerations. There are existing shared walking/bike trails along River Street, part of Crowley Road and parts of Don Road and Healesville-Kinglake Road.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Healesville is serviced by a number of public bus routes which run along Maroondah Highway:

684 - Melbourne to Eildon

685 - Lilydale Station to Healesville (via Coldstream and Yarra Glen)

686 - Crowley Road to Badger Creek (Monday to Friday)

687 - Crowley Road and Mt. Lebanon (Monday to Friday)

The local bus routes are shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Local Bus Routes



RECENT PROJECTS AND PROPOSALS

Parking Study

Consultants, Traffix Group, were engaged in 2008 by Yarra Ranges Council to undertake a car parking study of Healesville. The investigation involved extensive parking surveys, questionnaires to traders and residents and interviews with shoppers.

The assessment found a theoretical demand of 561-613 spaces within the town centre, and 694 spaces when the community market operates. The supply within the town centre was found to be 1,000 car spaces.

The Study concluded that there is an adequate supply of car parking in Healesville at that time. Given the passage of time and a need to improve existing car parking arrangements the structure plan will examine current car parking and overall transport and movement issues.

For further information about the Healesville Township Car Parking Study contact Strategic Planning on 9294 6165.

Hike & Bike Plan

Council's 2005 Hike and Bike Plan is a long term strategy to establish a pedestrian and bicycle network that provides communities with safe access to local destinations, connections between the rural townships and urban centres and a large trail system aligned through the scenic landscapes of the municipality linking key tourist attractions.

One of the key actions from the Plan was determining the feasibility of a Tourist Railway operating between Healesville and Yarra Glen. Tourist rail services now operate from the Healesville Railway Station on Sundays and Public Holidays between 11am and 4pm.

Another action was to establish an iconic tourist route of State tourism significance between Lilydale and Healesville following the old railway line through the scenic landscapes of the Yarra Valley. It was intended to provide a link for cyclists and walkers to well known wineries, food markets, art galleries and the townships of Yarra Glen and Healesville. With the establishment of the tourist railway, a shared or alternative route needs to be investigated and implemented.

Future projects identified in the plan also include:

- In consultation with Melbourne Water, investigate a connection along the Coranderrk Aqueduct to create a shared trail between Healesville and Woori Yallock in the long term. The establishment of this trail is dependent on negotiations with Melbourne Water and the ability to address issues associated with public access along an active water supply aqueduct.

- Investigate opportunities to link the Coranderrk Aqueduct to the O'Shannassy Aqueduct in order to create an off-road link between Healesville and Warburton.

Funding for these projects is expected to be made available over time.

The adopted Hike and Bike Plan report can be viewed on Council's website www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au

Bus Review

The State Government reviewed Melbourne's bus network between 2007 and 2009 in order to direct future investment in local bus services. The review included consultation with government, industry, community groups and the general public.

The findings of the Knox/Maroondah/Yarra Ranges review were released by the State Government in 2010. It identified that the most commonly raised general issues were:

- The need for expanded geographical coverage of the bus network
- The need for increased frequency of bus services
- Limited span of hours and days of operation

Other issues raised included:

- Traffic management issues, such as road network, traffic congestion, delays and access constraints
- Connections and coordination between trains and buses
- Bus stop infrastructure

The review made a range of recommendations about changes to the bus network, timetables, traffic and infrastructure. They were categorised into short, medium and long term actions.

Two years later only about 5% of the recommendations in the Knox/Maroondah/Yarra Ranges bus service review has been implemented. The rate of implementing recommendations has varied significantly with growth areas having much higher rates of implementation than established areas. Council continues to advocate to the State Government for implementation of the recommendations.

Taxi Review

When localities like Healesville are within one zone and key transport, education, entertainment and social services are within another zone many issues can result. These include taxi drivers being licensed to separate zones so that they are unable to pick up passengers within a different zone. This means that longer trips are not commercially viable for the drivers and passengers are often refused travel.

A review of the taxi boundaries has recently been undertaken as part of the Victorian Government's Taxi Industry Inquiry. The Terms of Reference for the review required a comprehensive investigation into all aspects of the taxi and hire car industry and a set of recommended reforms focused on achieving better outcomes for the travelling public.

Since the inquiry commenced the Government has released a Background Paper in May 2011 and then a Draft Report in May 2012 for public comment. Recommendations included Healesville being made part of the Urban Zone (not the previous Country Zone) and an overlapping section be created between the Healesville and Urban Zones. These reforms should improve the level of taxi services in Healesville.

The Final Report was submitted to the Victorian Government in September 2012 but the State Government has not yet indicated whether it will adopt the recommendations.

More information about the Taxi Industry Inquiry can be found at www.taxiindustryinquiry.vic.gov.au

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Are there any traffic congestion points in Healesville?
- How can walking be encouraged in the Healesville township? Can you suggest any priority locations for footpaths/shared paths?
- How can bike riding be encouraged in the Healesville township? Can you suggest any priority locations for bike paths?
- Do you have any issues with car parking in Healesville? If so, in what area and where do you think improvements need to be made?
- What are the priority public transport issues in Healesville?

5 Have your say



Discussion Questions

This Paper has described Healesville based around seven themes. At the end of each section questions about the themes were posed. The questions are also listed together below.

Housing

- What do you value about Healesville township's residential areas?
- How does the rising cost of housing impact on your family or community?
- Does housing in Healesville cater well for all members of the community? What is needed?
- Should there be more medium density housing (villa unit and similar)? Where should they be built?
- Is enough being done to allow people to age in place?
- Should some limited further subdivision to allow smaller lots be allowed in Healesville's current Low Density Residential areas? Which area, in particular?
- Is there some land just outside the Urban Growth Boundary that might be more suitable for limited further subdivision for housing or should the current township Urban Growth Boundary remain?
- Is there a need for additional aged persons accommodation? What type is needed and where should it be located?
- Are you aware of other housing related needs that should be considered in the Structure Planning process?

Business

- Does Healesville town centre have all the shops and services you would expect in a township of its size? What's missing?
- Should the numbers of a particular type of business be increased so there is more choice in Healesville?
- Are there types of businesses you think could work well and should be attracted to the area?
- Do you support a small increase in the size of the commercial area of Healesville?
- If the commercial area of Healesville were to be extended, where should the additional businesses be located?
- Is there any need to make more land available for industry?
- Do you have any views about what the key redevelopment sites identified in this Discussion Paper should be used for?
- How can Healesville encourage sustainable development opportunities and increase local employment?
- Does the tourist focus of the town cause any specific problems for you?
- What changes to the physical environment of Healesville would support your business?
- What changes to service provision in Healesville would support your business?
- Are there changes to the land use zonings that could lead to better planning outcomes and increased sustainable development opportunities?

Heritage & Public Spaces

- What do you value about Healesville's history?
- What buildings and/or places are important to you?
- Should maintaining Healesville's heritage buildings and places be a priority?
- What do you value about the character of Healesville?
- Should there be additional planning controls to guide development?
- Are there any issues with the layout of the town centre?
- Where would you like to see further footpaths and recreation trails?

- What sort of urban design works, such as tree planting, paving or seating, are a priority in the Healesville township?
- Do you have any ideas about the future of open spaces in the Healesville township such as Coronation Park or the Railway Precinct?

Natural Environment

- What do you value about the local Healesville environment and landscape?
- What are the priority projects for natural environmental protection/enhancement in the Healesville area?
- Is environmental sustainability important to you? What actions are a priority in Healesville?
- What are the key environmental challenges facing Healesville and what can be done about it?

Community facilities and services

- Does Healesville town centre have all the health and community services you would expect in a township of its size? What's missing?
- What are the priority services that need to be attracted to/ retained in the town?
- Should the development of more seniors housing and/or aged care facilities be encouraged in the area?
- What would help Healesville to remain a resilient community that is able to absorb shocks from events such as petrol price hikes, bushfires or climate change impacts?
- What additional education opportunities would you like to see provided in the township?
- Is there any further action Council could take which would support greater employment opportunities?

Physical Infrastructure

- Do water, sewerage, gas and electricity services meet domestic and business needs?
- Are there any issues with existing telecommunications in the Healesville area?
- What advantages will be had with the introduction of the National Broadband Network?
- Are there any problems with septic tanks in Healesville?
- Are there any drainage issues in the township in addition to the flood areas identified in the planning scheme?

Transport and Parking

- Are there any traffic congestion points in Healesville?
- How can walking be encouraged in the Healesville township? Can you suggest any priority locations for footpaths?
- How can bike riding be encouraged in the Healesville township? Can you suggest any priority locations for bike trials?
- Do you have any issues with car parking in Healesville? If so, in what area and where do you think improvements need to be made?
- What are the priority public transport issues in Healesville?

Tell us what you think

The Discussion Paper provides information and identifies a range of issues for Healesville. All of this is intended generate interest and to stimulate conversations and discussion. The questions posed are just prompts.

Do you have aspirations, ideas, priorities or concerns about Healesville and its future? Please join the conversation and tell us what you think!

You can let Council know your thoughts about the future of Healesville by:

- Completing a Feedback Sheet or sending a letter or email
- Joining an on-line discussion
- Chatting to a Strategic Planner at the Community Link

Further details about these options and a copy of the Feedback Sheet are available by phoning Council on 1300 368 333 during business hours, dropping in to the Healesville Community Link or going to our website at www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au and entering 'Healesville Structure Plan' in the search box.

Remember there will be further opportunities for input as the project progresses.

Further information

Further information about the Healesville Structure Plan project is available by contacting the project officer, Keryn Williams, on 9294 6193 or Strategic Planning on 9294 6165.

This Discussion Paper refers to a range of current and recently completed Council projects and studies. Electronic links to these documents can be found on Council's website www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au. At the top of the Home Page click on the A-Z index, select 'Healesville Structure Plan' and follow the links.

If you would prefer a paper copy of these reports please contact Strategic Planning.

If needed, we can also assist you in identifying the contact details for other proposals and plans outlined in this Discussion Paper.

Glossary

Community Housing	Rental housing made available for low to moderate income or special needs households, managed by community-based organisations that are, at least partly, subsidised by government.
Community Planning	Supports and assists with projects and plans initiated, developed and carried out by members of local communities.
Design & Development Overlay	A planning scheme mechanism which identifies areas which require the form of development and conditions of future use and development to be managed.
Ecological Vegetation Classes	Basic mapping units used for biodiversity planning and conservation assessment at landscape, regional and broader scales in Victoria. They are derived from large-scale forest type and plant community mapping.
Housing Strategy	The Yarra Ranges Housing Strategy is Council's long term plan to manage future housing growth so that it best meets the needs of the community.
Main Road	An arterial road upon which a higher volume of traffic travels on. A Main Road provides access to Secondary Roads (see separate definition in this glossary).
Medium Density Housing	Residential developments that are at higher densities than broadacre suburban subdivisions. The yield of broadacre subdivisions has traditionally been between 8 and 15 dwellings per hectare. Most commonly medium density housing ranges from 30 and 40 dwellings per hectare. These developments may consist of detached, semi-attached and attached housing such as villa units or similar.
National Broadband Network	A communication network designed for Australia's future needs. The network comprises of three technologies: optic fibre, fixed wireless and next-generation satellite. It is intended to provide more reliable, high-speed broadband access to all Australians.

Planning Scheme	The Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme regulates land use and development in the municipality.
Public Housing	Dwellings managed by the State housing authority to provide affordable rental accommodation to low income earners.
Regional Strategy Plan	The Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Regional Strategy Plan applies to all properties in the municipality and provides a broad strategic framework for land use and development. Any amendment to the planning scheme must be in accordance with the Regional Strategy Plan.
Secondary Road	The purpose of secondary roads is to lead traffic to and distribute it from main roads and to provide for traffic movements to and from local centres of community activity (also see 'Main Road' in this glossary).
Social Housing	Refers to either Public Housing or Community Housing (see separate definitions for each in this glossary).
Structure Plan	Sets a strategic land use policy direction for a locality or place.
Urban Growth Boundary	Contains the urban development of metropolitan Melbourne and the surrounding townships and protect agricultural land and other non-urban uses.

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- Melbourne Water, 2007**, Port Phillip and Westernport Regional River Strategy
- Traffix Group, 2008**, Healesville Township Car Parking Study
- Upper Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges Regional Authority, 1982 (as amended)**, Upper Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges Regional Strategy Plan
- Upper Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges Regional Authority, 1989**, Study of Sites of Botanical Significance
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- Lilydale and Yarra Valley Leader, 4 December 2012**, "Surgery in doubt at Healesville Hospital".

Websites

- <http://profile.id.com.au/yarra-ranges> provides demographic information from .id consultants about Healesville.
- <http://forecast2.id.com.au/Default.aspx?id=125&pg=5210> provides population forecasts from .id consultants about Healesville.
- www.yarravalleyrailway.org.au
- <http://hewi.friends.melbournewater.com.au> is a website maintained by Healesville Environmental Watch which provides local environmental information.
- www.nbn.gov.au provides information about the National Broadband Network.



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