



GEMBROOK

Township Strategy

Adopted
20 June 2011



CARDINIA

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1. INTRODUCTION

Gembrook is located in the north of the Cardinia Shire. It is about 55kms east of Melbourne. Gembrook is the easternmost of the Dandenong Ranges Hills towns, with a shared Hills heritage and special "Hills town" feel. Gembrook is unique amongst the Hills townships, in that it is also the southern gateway to the Central Highlands to the east, it overlooks the picturesque Yarra Valley to the north and the fertile plains of Westernport to the south. A true "crossroads" township, linked with four distinct regions, which is reflected in its many-sided character.

Predominant activities undertaken in and around Gembrook include; residential and rural residential living, farming, retail business, tourism, and passive and active recreation.

1.1. Purpose of the strategy

The Shire of Cardinia comprises of 19 townships and a number of rural localities, each with a distinct identity, character and role. Both the Council Plan and the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) recognise the need for the preparation and implementation of a township strategy for each of the Shire's townships. The township strategies provide a strategic policy framework for the future development of each township. The Gembrook Township Strategy provides clear direction in key areas of:

- Residential Development
- Economic Development
- Community Strengthening
- Open Space and Recreation
- Traffic and Transport
- Physical Infrastructure
- Environment
- Heritage
- Town Centre Design

This strategy sets out the key issues facing the Gembrook township and explains why they are important. The strategy also sets out objectives (what we are trying to achieve) and policies and actions (how the objectives will be achieved). Council, with the assistance of residents, local community groups and other government agencies will play a critical role in implementing the policies and actions set out in this strategy.

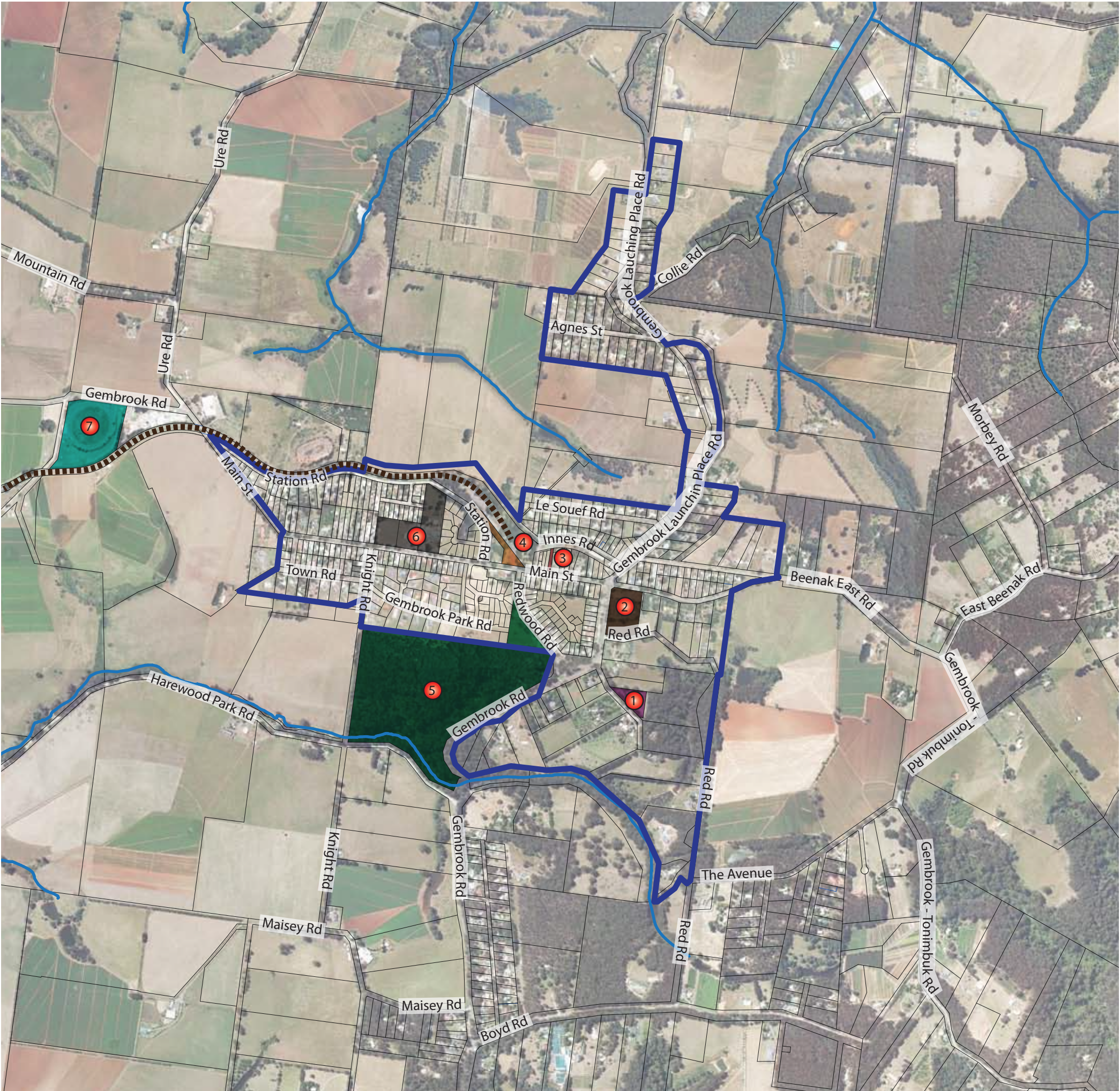
1.2. Strategy area

Geographically the Gembrook Township Strategy is focussed on the land inside the Gembrook Urban Growth Boundary as shown in Figure 1; however the community whom the strategy encompasses is much larger, extending out into the surrounding farming land and forests.

Figure 1

Study Area

Gembrook Township Strategy



1:15000 @ A3



Puffing Billy



Urban Growth Boundary



Waterway



Gembrook Cemetery



Gembrook Leisure Park & Community Centre



Gembrook Post Office



Puffing Billy - Train Station



Gembrook Park



Gembrook Primary School



Gembrook Sports Ground



2. SNAPSHOT OF GEMBROOK

2.1. History

Aboriginal History

The traditional land owners of the Gembrook region were members of the Kulin nation. Being located on a ridgeline, what is now known as the town of Gembrook was traditionally occupied by two tribes of the Kulin nation. To the north side of the ridge line (what is now Belgrave-Gembrook Road) lived the Wurrundjeri people and to the south side lived the Bunurong people. The Bunurong and Wurrundjeri intermarried and traded, moving freely across each other's territories. The contact was so frequent and so amicable, according to some observers, that the boundaries between would not necessarily have been rigidly defined.

Aboriginal people are known to have used fire to regularly burn undergrowth and flush out animals for hunting. It is thought that their regular use of fire may have helped the forests of the Dandenongs to thrive free of undergrowth until the Europeans arrived and changed these patterns.

European Settlement

Gembrook was first settled by Europeans in 1873 when the first land selection was taken out by the Le Soeuf family (Parker, 1995). It is believed that it was Albert Le Souef who proposed the name *Gembrook* for the town after he and a small syndicate "applied for a lease to prospect and mine gemstones in a small hitherto unnamed creek... which he named Gem Brook" (Parker, 1995, pg. 4). People attempted to mine for Gemstones, gold and tin in the area however it was not these which attracted more and more people to Gembrook, settlement was based on timber felling and intensive agriculture, capitalising on the rich red soils of the region. The first sawmill in Gembrook was established in 1898. In its first couple of years "the timber was taken by horse and bullock wagons, and later by tram line down to Nar Nar Goon where it was loaded onto trucks to be taken down to Melbourne on the main Gippsland railway line" (Parker, 1995, pg. 55).

Another key family in the history of Gembrook is the Ure family. In 1874 Mr John Ure "applied for a licence to select 213 acres, part of which became *Silver Wells*" (Parker, 1995, pg. 5). The family named the property Silver Wells after the first well sunk provided an abundant supply of pure water. The buildings that were constructed there were log buildings and they included a homestead, general store, blacksmith's shop, post office, butcher's shop and cheese factory. These buildings and their contents were classified by the National Trust in 1973. The remains of *Silver Wells* still stand on the Ure property 3km north of Gembrook today. Silverwells was subsequently abandoned as settlement concentrated around the current site of Gembrook at the turn of the century coinciding with the opening of the narrow gauge railway.

The year 1900 saw the arrival of the narrow gauge railway at Gembrook. "With the opening of the railway line to Gembrook there was a great upsurge in milling activity" (Parker, 1995, pg. 55). According to McCarthy (1987) "the importance of the railway to Gembrook cannot be overstated for, had the railway not been built, the township of Gembrook would not have developed at all (pg. 1). The steam train ceased commercial operation in 1953 due to a landslide, but re-emerged in the 1970s as the Puffing Billy tourist train from Belgrave to Emerald. Then in 1998, due to popular demand, Puffing Billy resumed services through to Gembrook.

Schooling began in Gembrook in 1878 when a school was opened which shared its head teacher half time with the Emerald State School, both schools being represented by the number 2110. After 18 months, Emerald became a full time school and Gembrook changed to being a half time school with Gembrook South (S.S. 2155) and as such changed to number 2155. It was in August 1883 that Gembrook became a full time school in itself and was allocated the number 2506, being operated out of the original leased hut in Gembrook North. In 1884 school began being held at the Union Church where it continued to be held until 1906 when the Gembrook primary school was opened in Main Street, following which the population in Gembrook steadily increased. The present school was built during the First World War to the west of the original site. (Strickland, 1983)

Following the Second World War, as part of the Australian Soldier Settlement Schemes, land at “Harewood Park”, Gembrook was taken up by eight settler families – Bradshaw, George, McKay, MacKenzie, Patullo, Sheldon and Worthington. The eighth family was the Severino family, who succeeded the Patullo family, as they moved from their block in the early 1950’s. All the settler families were active members of the community, taking part in local sporting groups, volunteer committees and the R.S.L and R.S.L Auxiliary. It is believed that it was largely due to the efforts of the settler families that electricity was delivered in Gembrook in the early nineteen fifties. The last settler family to leave Gembrook was the Severino family in 1965. (Smith, 2011)

The exposed red hills of Gembrook and the surrounding area are the result of timber felling at the turn of the century. Once cleared the land was taken up by farmers, many of whom were new migrants to the country. The rich soils were suited to intensive agriculture, most notably potato farming. This crop raising has created the characteristic “patchwork” views of the hills which are so prized by locals and tourists alike.

Potato farming was very successful in the area for a number of years, providing a strong economic base to the town. In more recent years the strength of this farming activity has declined due to a number of cumulative factors. Unfortunately the area has been faced with major difficulties over the last 30 years. Dieldrin is present in the red soils and much of the area is also affected by an organism called the potato cyst nematode (PCN). These two separate problems have combined to create an immensely difficult situation for many growers.

One of the longest standing buildings and businesses in Gembrook is the Ranges Hotel, which was built around the turn of the century and is still operating today. Feedback from the Gembrook community indicates that there is a strong desire to see the pub restored to celebrate its history and to be a central tourist attraction for the area.

Gembrook also has a strong association with Scouting throughout its history with the commencement of Scouting in Gembrook in the early 1920s. In 1931 and again in 1935, the Gembrook Scout Group was privileged to have Lord Baden Powell, founder of the worldwide scouting movement, visit Gilwell Park. During his 1931 visit, Lord Baden Powell planted a ceremonial Oak tree which is still standing today.

To the north of the township there still remains today a section of the Pack Track which was the original means of access to the community. The Pack Track connected Gembrook with Bowman’s track and therefore with the larger towns of Berwick and Pakenham. This track was not suitable for vehicles to use, only those on foot or on horses.

2.2. 1998 Gembrook Township Strategy

The 1998 Gembrook Township Strategy was adopted by Council on 19 January 1998. Council engaged Tract Consultants in conjunction with KPMG Management Consultants, Grogan Richards and Design Plus to prepare a strategy plan for Gembrook Township and its environs. The strategy was prepared in conjunction with a steering committee co-ordinated by Council. The purpose of the project was to prepare a soundly based strategy for the development of the Gembrook Township over the next 15-20 years which recognised and built on the distinct character of the township. The strategy was broken up into 5 sections: Introduction, Issues Analysis, Strategic Direction, Strategic Planning Directions, and Implementation Measures. The Strategic Planning directions were broken up into 4 main topic areas: Land use, Tourism Development, Urban design, including heritage and Puffing Billy, and Traffic and parking – both regional and local.

The draft 1998 Gembrook Township Strategy and background documentation was formally exhibited by Council for one month from 1 April to 1 May 1997. During this period notices were distributed throughout Gembrook and a copy of the strategy was displayed both at the Council offices and the Gembrook Post Office. A community meeting was also held at the Gembrook Community Centre which was attended by some 50 people.

The content of the 1998 Strategy has influenced and been considered in the preparation of the revised strategy and where still relevant and appropriate, content has been transferred into this strategy.

2.3. Demographic profile

Figure 2 outlines the area to which the demographic data in this strategy applies. This is based on a selected aggregation of ABS geographical boundaries.

Figure 2: Statistical Geography for Gembrook

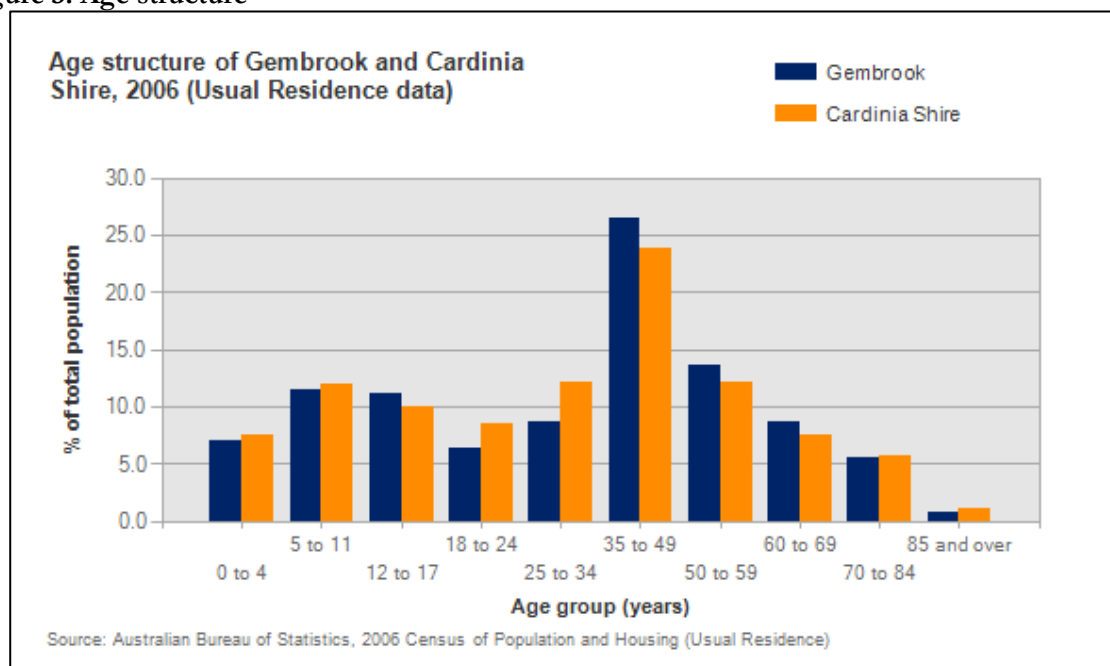


Source: Cardinia Community Profile - www.id.com.au

In 2006, Gembrook had a population of approximately 1,898 residents and 639 households representing about 3.3% of Cardinia Shire's total population. Gembrook has experienced a recent influx in the population as a result of a number of new dwellings being constructed in the area. Between 2001 and 2006 the number of dwellings increased from 663 to 709 and the average household size increased marginally from 2.85 to 2.87. This is in contrast to a drop in population numbers between 1991 and 1996 from 1676 to 1630 people. The population forecasts predict the population of Gembrook to increase slightly to about 2041 by 2016 but it is generally fairly stable. The average household size is slightly larger than that of Cardinia as a whole.

The age structure of Gembrook in 2006 was represented by a large number of people in the 0 – 17 age group and the 35 – 59 age group, ie. families. This is representative of the large influx in residents in this age group between 2001 and 2006. The most significant changes in age structure expected in the Gembrook region between 2006 – 2011 are in the youngest age groups and the oldest age groups. There will be a drop in the number of young people aged 0 – 9 (-36), but an increase in the number of people aged 50 and over (+153). This increase in people in the older age groups is predicted to continue towards 2031.

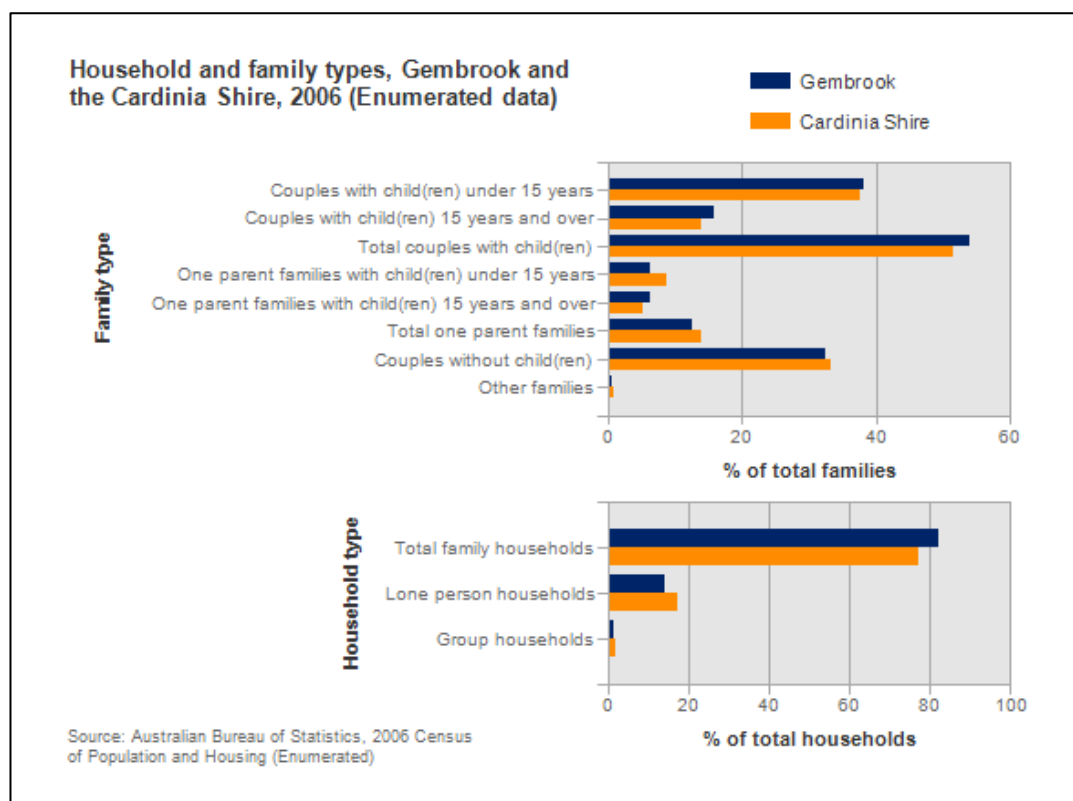
Figure 3: Age structure



Source: Cardinia Community Profile - www.id.com.au

The predominant household and family type in Gembrook is couples with dependant children (54%). Although couples with children will continue to be the most common household type in Gembrook into the future, there is predicted to be an increase in the number of lone person households (increasing from 13% in 2006 to 22.9% in 2031).

Figure 4: Household and Family Types



Source: Cardinia Community Profile - www.id.com.au

Analysis of the country of birth of residents in Gembrook compared to Cardinia Shire shows that there is a higher percentage of overseas born people living in Gembrook than in the Shire as a whole. The most common international country of birth is the United Kingdom. The most common non-English speaking country of birth is Italy, followed very closely by Germany.

2.4. Policy context

Both the Council Plan and the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) recognise the need for the preparation and implementation of a township strategy for each of the Shire's townships. The MSS recognises that the pattern of settlement in the Cardinia Shire is primarily focused in townships ranging from large urban centres to rural localities. In this context, Gembrook has been identified as being a large rural township. The MSS also recognises that each township has a distinct character which should be maintained and enhanced. The MSS states that a major element of the character of the hills towns is the diversity of lot sizes ranging from urban residential, to rural residential, to rural lots which assists in the retention of areas of native vegetation.

Strategic directions relevant to Gembrook to achieve the objective for townships in the MSS are:

- Limit residential development, including rural residential subdivision, in the hills towns unless provided for by the strategy plan for the township or the development results in significant environmental or community benefits.
- Maintain the current diverse range of lot sizes in the hills towns as an intrinsic part of their character.

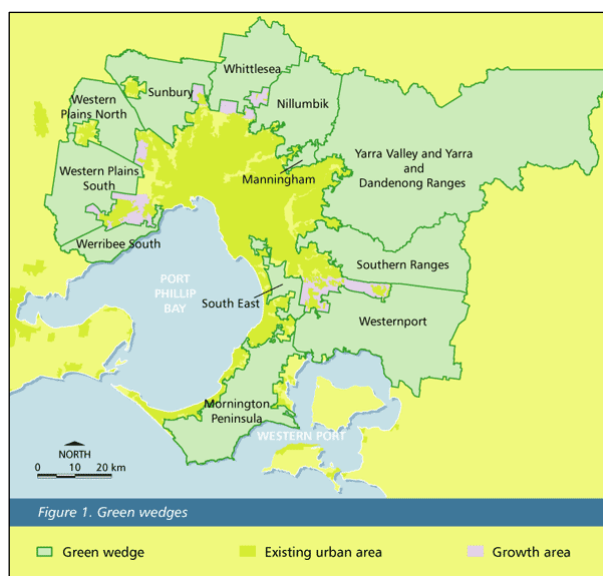
The State Government released 'Melbourne 2030 – Planning for Sustainable Growth' in October 2002. Melbourne 2030 is a strategic plan developed to manage growth across metropolitan Melbourne and the surrounding region. In an attempt to conserve rural activities and significant natural features outside the growth areas of metropolitan Melbourne, the State Government has identified 12 green wedges (Figure 5). The green wedges in metropolitan Melbourne contain elements that are of social, economic and environmental significance. The green wedge legislation seeks to protect the green wedges from inappropriate development. Gembrook is located within the Yarra Valley and Yarra and Dandenong Ranges green wedge.

The significant features of this green wedge include:

- Areas of environmental and landscape qualities
- State and National parks
- Native vegetation and fauna habitat
- Areas of productive agricultural potential

Cardinia Shire Council, in partnership with the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) and the Northern Ranges Community, is currently preparing the Northern Ranges Green Wedge Management plan. This plan will evaluate the current and possible future uses of the land in the Cardinia portion of the Yarra Valley and Yarra and Dandenong Ranges Green Wedge which lies outside the main townships.

Figure 5: Metropolitan Green Wedges



Source: Melbourne 2030

3. VISION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

3.1. Vision

The desired vision for Gembrook Township over the next 10 – 15 years can be summarised as:

Gembrook is a sustainable Hills community which includes an established township boundary surrounded by farmland and native forest. Gembrook fosters a close knit, welcoming and supportive community with a sense of town pride amongst the locals. The Main Street is economically viable, presenting an interesting mix of businesses for both locals and visitors, whilst preserving a heritage character. Gembrook is a safe and pleasant place to be and is a highly desirable place to live, work and visit.

3.2. Strategic objectives

The key objectives for the Gembrook township (in no hierarchical order) to achieve the desired vision are to:

- Consolidate residential development within the urban growth boundary.
- Establish housing opportunities within the town centre which allow the community to age in place.
- Facilitate developments respectful of the existing township character and the surrounding landscape.
- Retain a mix of lot sizes throughout Gembrook.
- Promote Gembrook as a sustainable town by encouraging environmentally sustainable principles in developments.
- Establish an attractive, low speed, pedestrian friendly environment throughout the town centre.
- Enhance and consolidate the town centre
- Increase local employment opportunities.
- Provide for light industrial land uses to service the township.
- Improve opportunities for services, events and activities for both short and long stay visitors.
- Maintain and enhance community services and facilities.
- Encourage community cohesion and participation in community life.
- Provide and maintain open spaces to meet the active and passive recreational needs of the community across a wide range of user groups.
- Value, protect and restore the natural environment and sites of heritage significance.
- Make Gembrook a walkable town, better connecting the town to open space and encouraging recreation and active transport opportunities
- Maintain, improve and increase use of public transport services and facilities
- Provide or upgrade utility services to improve the health and amenity of residents and to minimise environmental impacts.
- Protect the environmental and landscape values of the area.
- Protect and conserve indigenous flora and fauna.
- Protect and improve waterways
- Minimise the risk of, and damage caused by, wildfire

3.3. Framework Plan

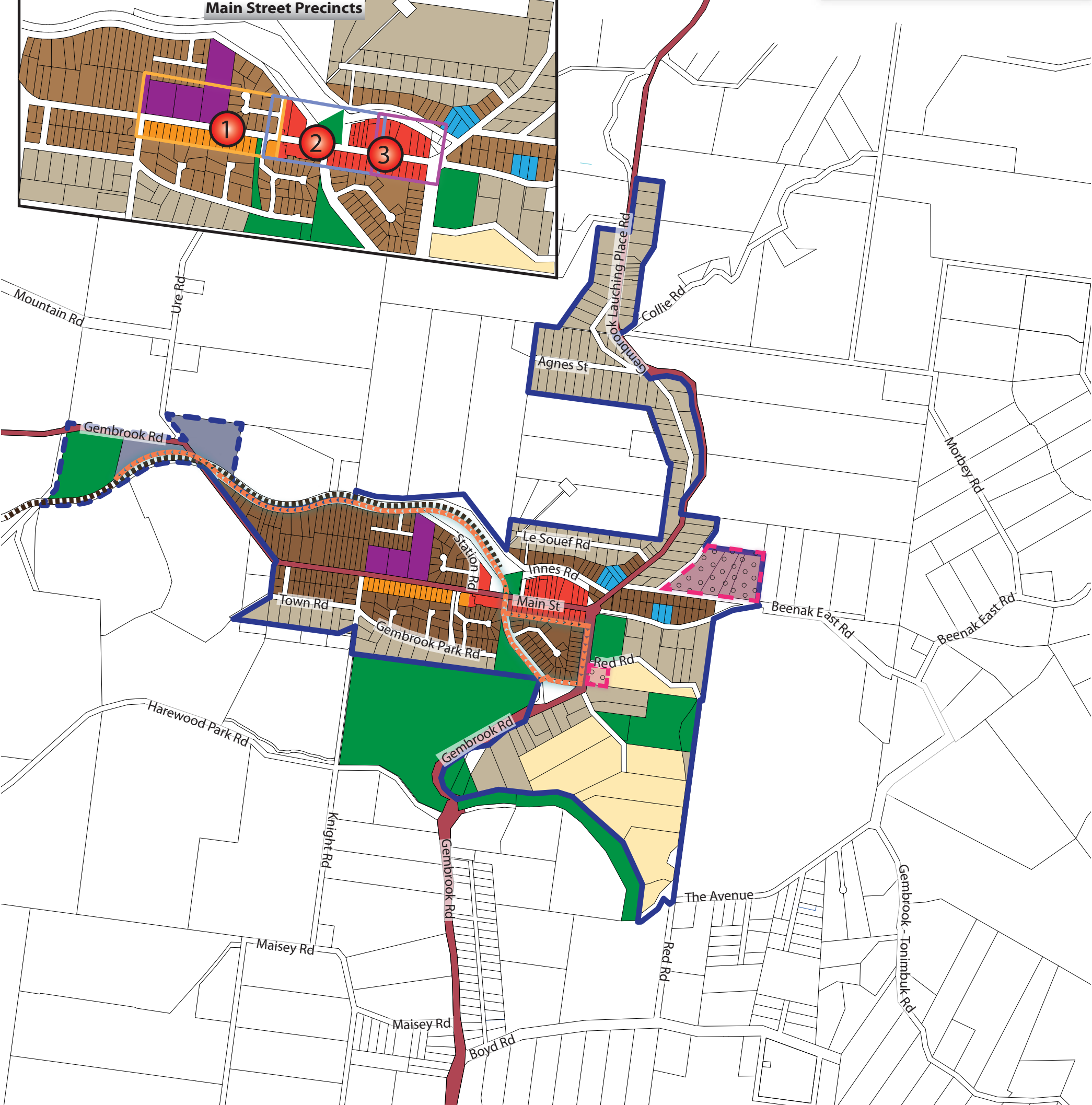
The Gembrook Township Framework plan, Figure 6, illustrates the proposed land use changes for the township in the life of this strategy. The land use changes include:

- Investigating the potential to rezone two small Green Wedge Zone properties at the western end of town for light industrial purposes.
- Rezoning the Rural Living Zoned properties on Blackwood Road and Red Road to Low Density Residential Zone, with a schedule to this zone to prevent further subdivision of these lots.
- The identification of two areas as residential development investigation areas to allow for modest growth of the township.
- The identification of two sites where retirement housing would be encouraged.
- Rezoning some existing Residential 1 Zoned properties to Low Density Residential Zone and some existing Low Density Residential Zoned properties to Residential 1 Zone to better reflect the character of these areas.
- The identification of a town loop pedestrian trail important in linking key features of the town, and a connection to the Gembrook Sports Ground.
- The creation of three precincts with clear guidelines to encourage appropriate land uses in the commercial area of Main Street.

Figure 6

Framework Plan

Gembrook Township Strategy



1:15000 @ A3



Puffing Billy



Urban Growth Boundary



Proposed Urban Growth Boundary



Arterial Road



Residential Development - investigation areas



Retirement Housing - Potential Sites



Light Industrial - investigation areas



Traditional Residential



Low Density Residential



Restricted Low Density Residential



Pedestrian Trail



Services & Mix Use Precinct



Central Retail Precinct



Arts & Community Precinct



Retail & Business



Mixed Use



Primary School



Reserves & Open Space



4. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

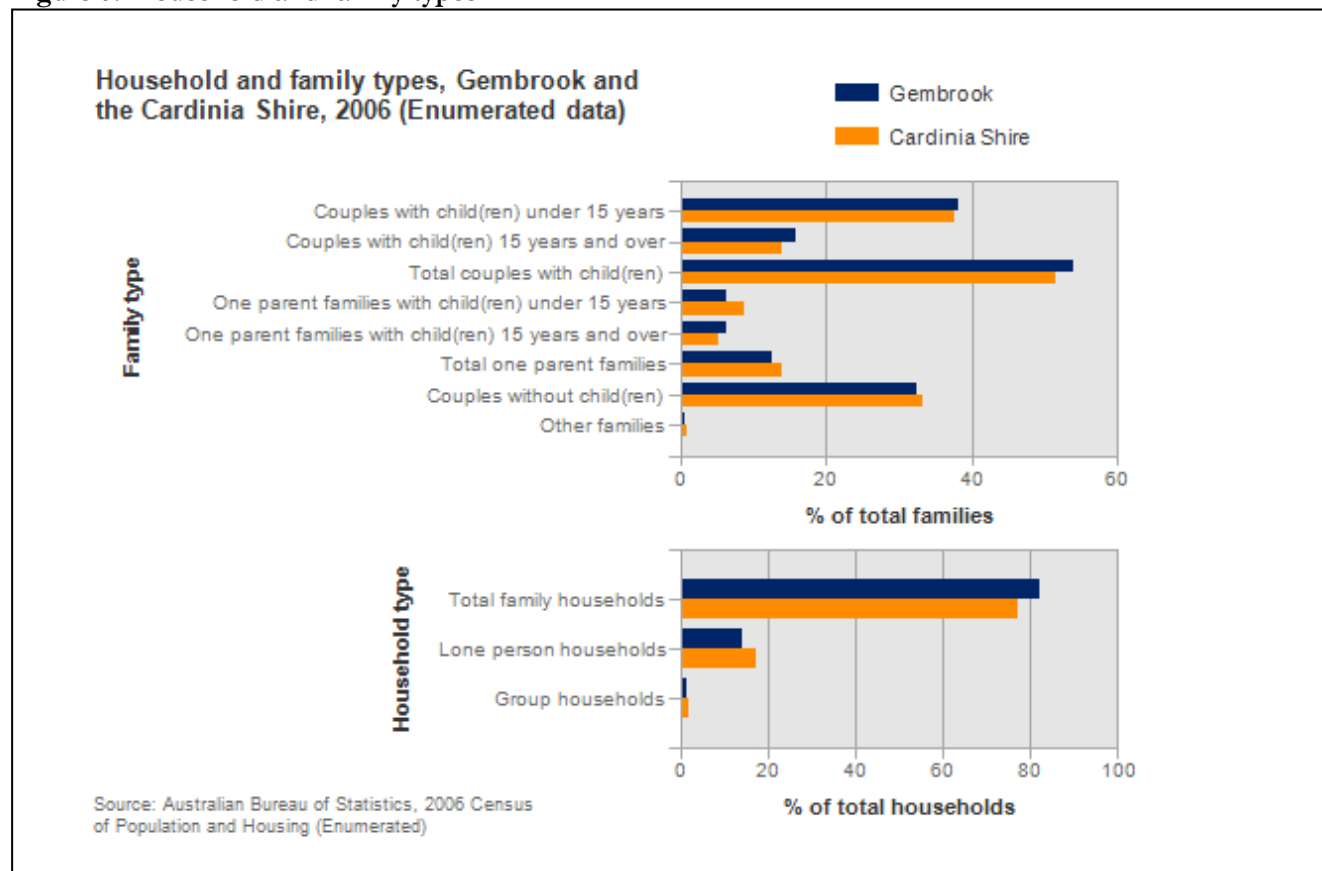
4.1. Overview

Gembrook, like many of the hills towns, was founded along a section of naturally flatter ground, following the ridge-lines of the hills. Development of the town has generally occurred along the two main roads which service the town according to the location of services and topographical constraints. In 2002 the State Government released “Melbourne 2030 – Planning for sustainable growth”. The purpose of this plan is to guide Melbourne’s growth and development towards the year 2030. As part of the release of Melbourne 2030, a boundary was put around Metropolitan Melbourne to restrict residential development; this boundary is referred to as the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). As Gembrook had an existing Township Strategy at the time, which clearly defined the township boundary for residential development, an Urban Growth Boundary was placed around Gembrook too. This boundary now sets a clear limit to the town’s future population growth.

4.2. Current family and household profile

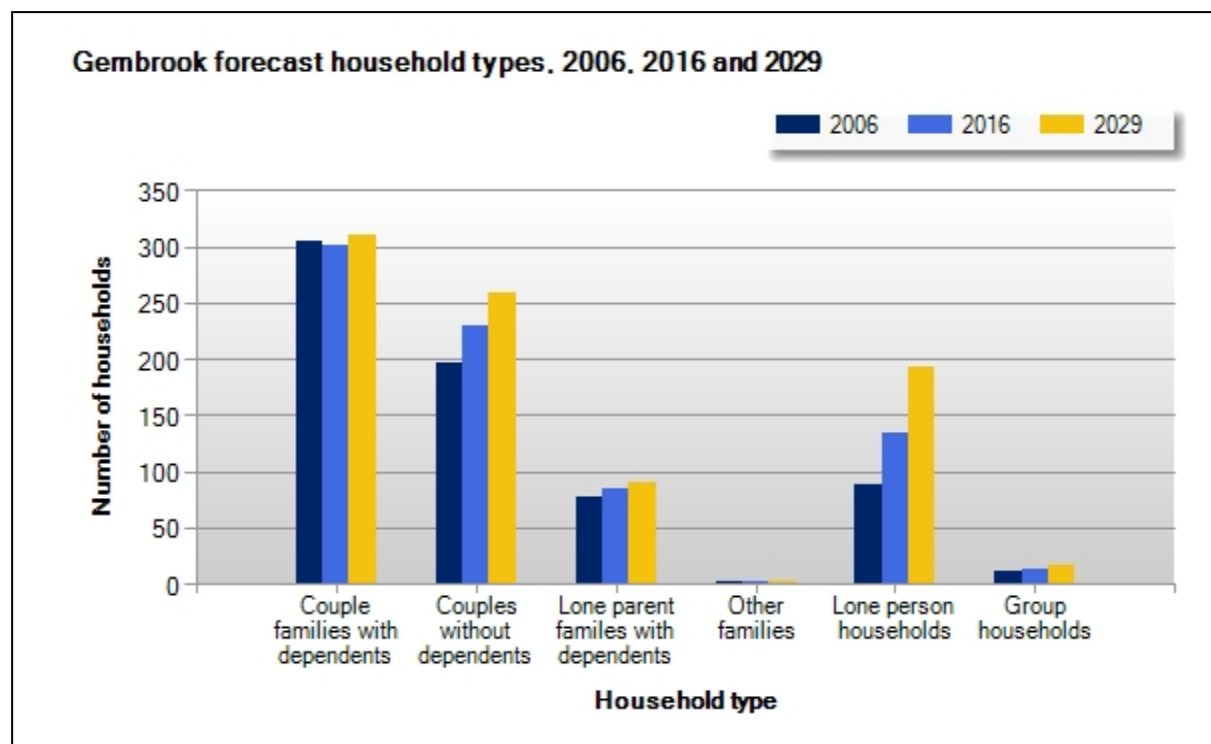
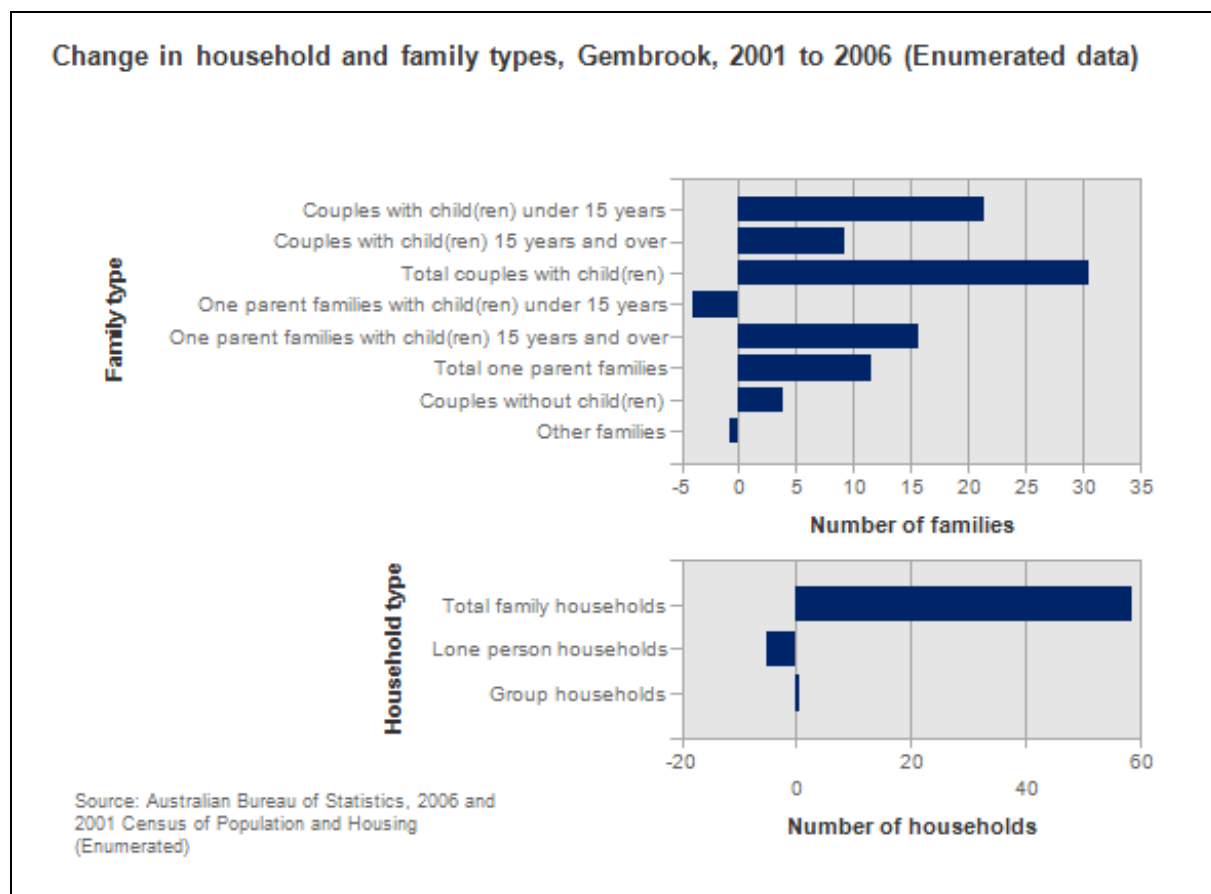
Analysis of the family types in Gembrook in 2006 shows that, like Cardinia Shire as a whole, the most common family type is Couples with children, particularly couples with children under 15. Between 2001 and 2006, Census data shows that the number of households in Gembrook increased by 48 households. Despite couples with children being the most common family type in Gembrook, the most common household size is two people, followed by four people. The number of two and four person households jumped quite significantly between 2001 and 2006 in Gembrook. Forecast data shows that between 2006 and 2021, there is likely to be a significant increase in the number of couples without children households and lone person households.

Figure 7: Household and family types



Source: Cardinia Community Profile - www.id.com.au

Figure 8: Changes in household and family types in the recent past and into the future



Source: Cardinia Community and Household Forecasts - www.id.com.au

4.3. Current dwelling typology and ownership patterns

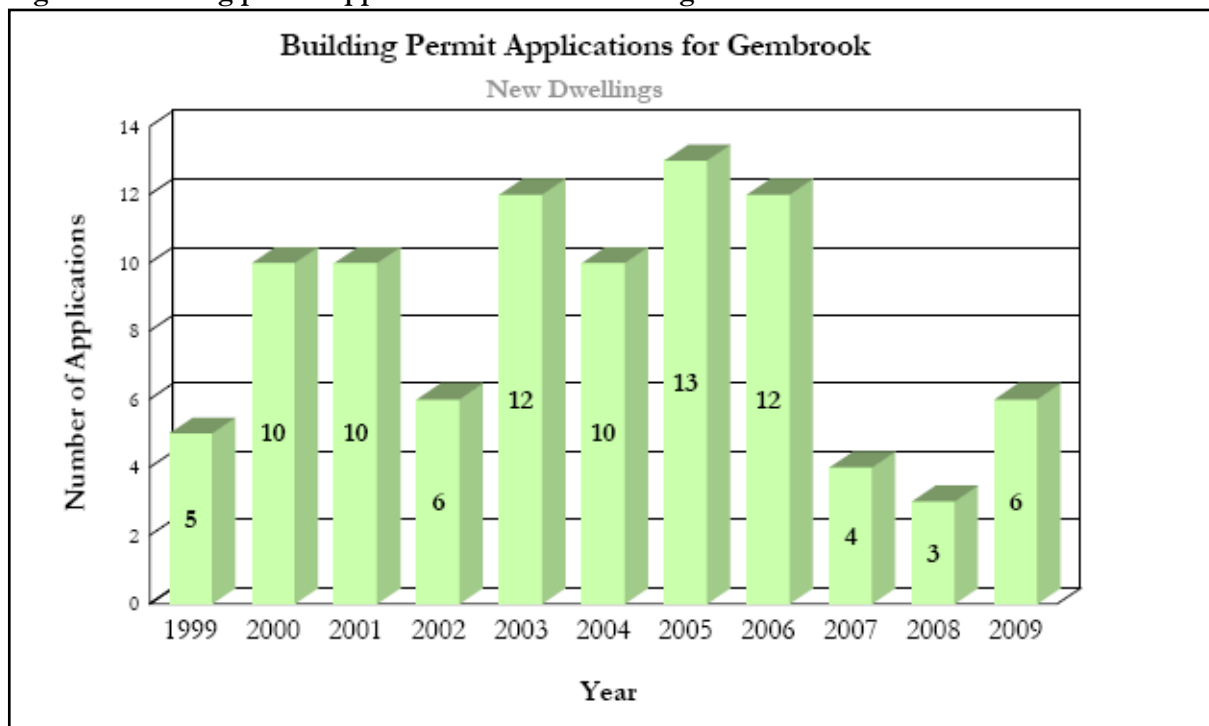
The predominant dwelling type in Gembrook is by far the separate house. Within the township itself, as defined by the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), the size of lots in the Residential 1 Zone (closest to the centre of town) vary between about 780m² to 6000m² with most Residential 1 Zoned lots being around 1000 – 2000m². Lots within the Low Density Residential Zone vary between about 1000m² and 34,000m² with most lots between 2000 – 4000m². The third residential zone found within the Gembrook UGB is the Rural living Zone. These lots vary in size from about 6,000m² to 40,700m². There are only 10 properties zoned as Rural Living Zone within the Urban Growth Boundary of Gembrook. The Rural Living Zone is not considered an appropriate zone inside the UGB and as such these properties will be appropriately rezoned in the future.

Majority of houses in Gembrook are either being purchased or are owned, there are very few properties being rented. Between 2001 and 2006, the number of households being purchased increased and the number of houses which are owned decreased, the number being rented stayed about the same.

4.4. Trends in residential development

A comparison of building permit approvals between 1999 and 2009 can provide an indication of the level of investment in the area. The table below shows that there was a spike in building permit approvals in 2005 and 2006, but this has dropped off quite significantly. The average number of building permits issued for Gembrook each year between 1999 and 2009 was 22. Figure 9 shows how many of these approvals related specifically to new dwellings.

Figure 9: Building permit applications for new dwellings



Source: Cardinia Shire Council

4.5. Housing diversity

The majority of the dwellings in Gembrook are separate, family sized homes on large blocks. This is great for families and those who are happy and able to maintain a large garden, but not so suitable for elderly people, people with limited mobility or those who are time poor and do not have the ability to maintain a large lot. Feedback from the community has shown that there is a distinct lack of housing in Gembrook to cater for people in this demographic. This need is reinforced by the demographic trends indicating that Gembrook has an aging population. At the moment, when elderly residents are looking to downsize their home and property many are forced to leave the area as there are few options available for them in

Gembrook. This is very hard for some residents as they have lived in Gembrook for many years. Although the majority of any future new lots created in Gembrook should be at least 1000m² in area, there should be a diversity of lot sizes to cater for a diversity of dwelling types. Additional housing for elderly people or people with disabilities needs to be provided in Gembrook and it needs to be located within the town centre.

4.6. The landscape context

Gembrook is the Easternmost of the Dandenong Ranges Hills towns, with a shared Hills heritage and special "Hills town" feel. Gembrook is unique amongst the Hills townships, in that it is also the southern gateway to the Central Highlands to the east, it overlooks the picturesque Yarra Valley to the north and the fertile plains of Westernport to the south. A true "crossroads" township, linked with four distinct regions, which is reflected in its many-sided character. Gembrook is in a semi rural setting with much of the land outside the immediate town centre being either farmland or State Park.

4.7. Residential character

The character of the residential areas in Gembrook is strongly influenced by the landscape, environment, topography and views in the area. Traditionally, the lots are well vegetated and dwellings sit below the canopy line of the trees. Dwellings in Gembrook have traditionally been characterised by single storey developments on large allotments, with block sizes becoming smaller the closer one gets to the town centre. Dwellings are nestled amongst the landscape, are of muted tones and are well setback from the boundaries. Building materials usually include either face brick or weatherboard wall cladding, with a tiled or tin roof. Dwellings have eaves and usually some form of verandah. Any differences in development features tend to correlate with the two main residential zones in the town: Low Density Residential Zone and Residential 1 Zone as outlined below.

Low Density Residential:

- Large residential lots (2-4000m²)
- Single storey dwellings
- Open or no fences. Lot lines blur together from the street
- Bush setting, well vegetated.
- Dwellings set back a long way from the street.
- Roads are narrow and usually unmade.
- Driveways are predominantly crushed rock.
- Most dwellings have eaves and verandahs are common
- External cladding is of muted tones.
- Minimal hard surface areas

Traditional Residential:

- Lots are about 1000m²
- No, low or hedge style front fencing
- Mix of native and exotic vegetation
- Predominantly single storey designs
- Single driveway access
- Dwellings are setback from side boundaries.
- Dwellings have eaves and verandahs are common

Desired future character guidelines:

The rural character of Gembrook is valued by the local community. New dwellings should not replicate existing dwellings, but should seek to be respectful of existing dwelling styles while incorporating individual character and sustainable design features. The following is an outline of the desired future character.

- Detached, single or split level design which is sympathetic to the topography of the land and the surrounding landscape. Dwellings should not protrude above the tree canopy line.
- Well vegetated lots, including retention of existing established trees.
- Dwellings setback from boundaries to create a sense of openness and to allow for screen vegetation.
- Single driveway access
- Site responsive design minimising vegetation removal and cut and fill.
- Minimal hard surface coverage, particularly within the frontage.
- Sustainable design features including eaves, good solar orientation, energy efficient design and water tanks (see *Sustainable design* section below).
- Non-existent, low, open (at least 80% visual permeability) or hedge style fencing.
- Well articulated facades with elements like verandahs and porches.
- External cladding of muted tones.
- Use of traditional building materials like face brick, weatherboards, and tiled or tin roofing.
- Encourage the use of recycled materials.

Some recent developments have not been entirely consistent with the above desired future character, however these dwellings should be seen as the exception and not a precedent. There are some discrepancies around the town centre between lots sizes, development features, and the land zoning and as such it is considered that these lots should be rezoned appropriately. This will result in some lots currently zoned Residential 1 Zone becoming Low density residential Zone and vice versa.

4.8. Rural residential lots and rural – urban interface

There are a number of rural residential lots outside the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) of Gembrook which add to the diversity of housing in the town but are not appropriate for further development. These low density rural residential areas still have a connection to Gembrook and form part of the retail and community catchment.

The issue of the viability of farming on properties which interface with the urban area of Gembrook was raised as an issue for property owners. The management of off site impacts in these cases is a real concern. This was raised as a particular problem for the properties between Le Souef Road and Agnes Street as they are surrounded by residential properties on three sides. It is recognised that the relationship between land uses and issues of land management in this area needs to be further examined. Such examination will be undertaken as part of the preparation of the Northern Ranges Green Wedge Management Plan.

When it comes to building on rural residential lots, one of the key challenges faced is striking a balance between the vegetation removal requirements associated with the Wildfire Management Overlay (WMO) and the vegetation retention requirements of other parts of the planning scheme. In this context, careful site planning is vital to ensure a balanced outcome addressing both of these issues.

4.9. Themes

Topography

The ridge top location of Gembrook means that, aside from along the Main Street, the topography of Gembrook is quite undulating. It is this undulating topography that provides the opportunity for some very beautiful view lines. These view lines are an important part of the character of Gembrook and it is important that any new development is considerate of its impact on the surrounding landscape.

Landscape

The landscape consists of rolling hillsides of patchwork soils with pockets of native vegetation. The roadsides are quite well vegetated which gives the area a bush setting.

Subdivision Pattern

The area inside the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) is mostly characterised by large residential blocks with majority of lots varying in size from about 800m² to 4000m². Land outside the UGB varies in size between large residential lots, to lifestyle or hobby farms, to large hectare rural farms. This diversity in lots sizes is valued by the community and helps to contribute to the unique character of Gembrook.

Sustainable design

The residents of Gembrook can promote sustainable development through energy and water efficiency, reducing the adverse effect of building materials on the environment and recycling wherever possible. Energy efficiency can be achieved in the design of new dwellings or the retrofitting of existing dwellings through:

- Incorporating passive solar design principles to maximise day-lighting and passive heating opportunities
- Designing the layout and external openings in all new dwellings to allow cross ventilation and provide low and high level openings to provide for vertical ventilation
- Using double glazing where appropriate
- Using external shading devices for openings on the north, east and west facades
- Maximise the opportunities provided for natural light and sunlight into buildings particularly in winter months.
- Providing appropriate shading for windows
- Using light wells and skylights for rooms without external walls
- Using light coloured external and internal finishes to reflect available light

Materials and appliances have a significant impact on energy usage, new developments should:

- Use building materials with high thermal mass to store heat during winter
- Use appropriate insulation materials to conserve energy use
- Select appliances with high energy efficiency star ratings
- Use recycled material or materials that have a low embodied energy
- Install solar photo voltaic cells
- Optimise opportunities to use renewable energy sources and incorporate renewable energy technologies wherever possible

Integrating landscape design can contribute to sustainable outcomes. For example:

- Use deciduous plants to shade windows from summer sun
- Use materials that do not leach chemicals into the ground

To achieve water efficiency:

- Incorporate Water Sensitive Urban Design elements to prevent storm water run off
- Install rain water tanks for rain water harvesting
- Install a grey-water re-use system
- Install AAA dual flush toilets and AAA rated showers and taps
- Use native plants in the garden
- Maximise the use of permeable surfaces in all outdoor spaces

To reduce the adverse impact of building materials on the environment:

- Select dimensions to suit standard material sizes to reduce wastage during construction
- Select materials that require minimal finishes and maintenance.
- Prefer recycled and environmentally benign materials

For waste minimisation:

- Maximise building longevity through creation of flexible and readily adaptable designs
- Provide facilities to assist waste separation into reusable, recyclable, compostable and landfill components
- Incorporate organic and water-based site waste disposal systems into landscaping design.

4.10. Future Development Opportunities

There is an expressed need in Gembrook for housing options for those of retirement age. Although there is a community desire to maintain large lot sizes in the area, this also needs to be balanced with the need to provide a diverse range of housing options to meet the needs of the community. Small dwellings on smaller lots to meet this need would be best located in the centre of the township to ensure easy access to Main Street services as well as to keep the impact on the surrounding landscape to a minimum. The township framework plan (pg 14) identifies some potential sites that could be developed for retirement style housing.

The township framework plan also identifies two areas for further investigation for residential development. The selection of these areas took into consideration a number of factors including: topography, vegetation cover, proximity to the town centre, view lines, potential for future connection to sewer, and wildfire risk.

There is no intention to expand residential development in Gembrook outside the Urban Growth Boundary. There is also no intention to allow further subdivision of the lots currently zoned Rural Living Zone to the south of the township when they are rezoned to Low Density Residential Zone. It should also be noted that in an effort to reduce the impact on the environment, all new developments in Gembrook (in and outside of the sewerage backlog program areas) will be required to connect to sewer unless they have the capability to manage their domestic wastewater onsite.

4.11. Key issues

- Lack of diversity of housing types and lot sizes in Gembrook., which is particularly problematic for those entering retirement age.
- Design response to surrounding landscape.
- Storm water runoff from new residential estates.
- Balancing planning scheme requirements for vegetation retention with WMO requirements for vegetation removal.

4.12. Objectives

- Retain a mix of lot sizes throughout Gembrook.
- Consolidate residential development within the urban growth boundary.
- Establish housing opportunities within the town centre which allow the community to age in place.
- Facilitate developments respectful of the existing township character and the surrounding landscape.
- Promote Gembrook as a sustainable town by encouraging environmentally sustainable principles in developments.

4.13. Policy

- Support development within 400m walking distance of the town centre which meets the needs of retirees within Gembrook.
- Implement the desired future character guidelines in the assessment of new development applications.
- Provide for development in accordance with the Township Framework Plan.
- Encourage the incorporation of sustainable design principles in new and existing developments.

4.14. Actions

- Investigate supported housing options for older persons and people with disabilities.
- Prepare new planning controls which implement the desired future character guidelines.
- Amend the Cardinia Planning Scheme to facilitate development in accordance with the Gembrook Township Framework Plan.
- Further investigate the areas identified on the Gembrook Township Framework Plan for residential development.

5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

5.1. Overview

The main street of Gembrook serves as a local shopping centre, meeting the primary needs of the local community on a day to day basis. Gembrook's commercial centre is generally used by residents for convenience purchases with larger shopping requirements being met further afield. Gembrook currently has a fairly limited tourism appeal but considerable potential. The main draw cards are Puffing Billy, the beautiful surrounding landscapes including the Bunyip State Park and the monthly Gembrook market. It is considered that there is room to better capitalise on the potential tourism market and this is further discussed in this chapter.

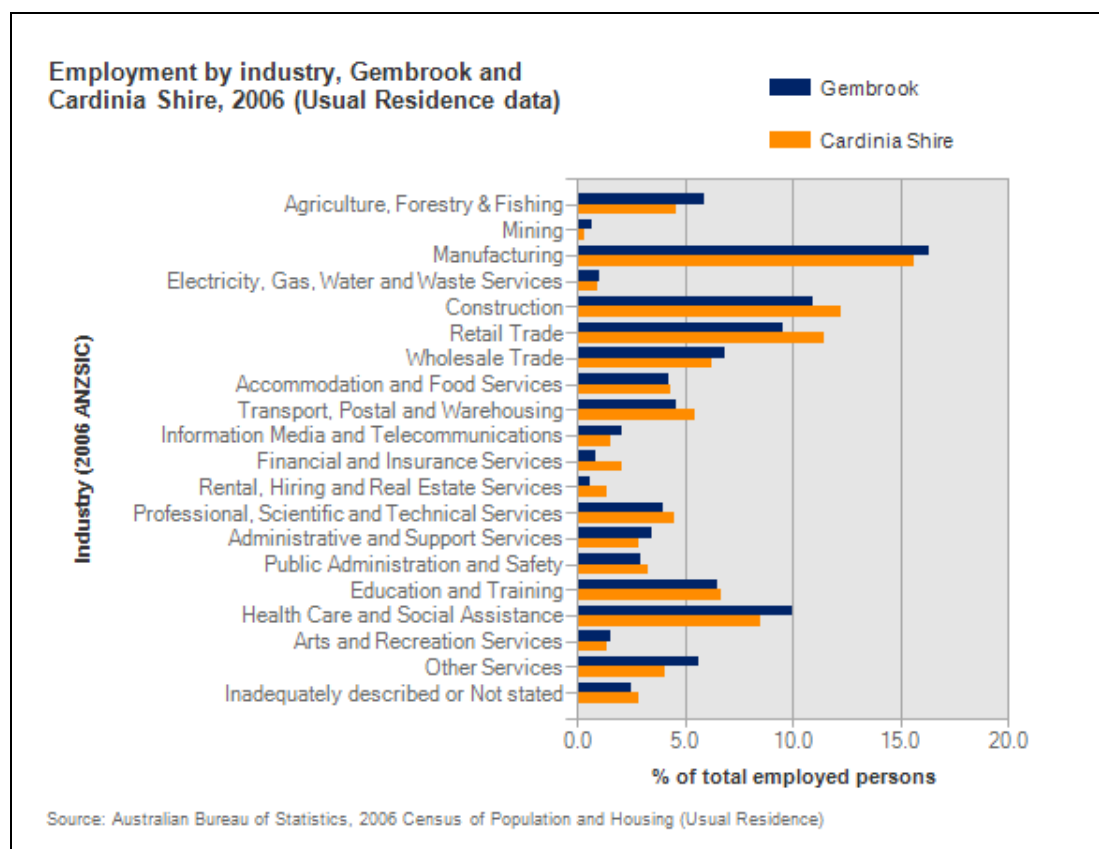
5.2. Workforce profile

The size of Gembrook's labour force in 2006 was 935 people, which accounts for 67.7% of the resident population (aged 15+). This is slightly higher than across Cardinia as a whole (66.4%). Of the 935 people in the labour force, 534 were employed full time, 325 were employed part time, 25 didn't state their employment status, and 52 were unemployed.

Gembrook has a skilled and educated workforce. 11.8% of the population have achieved a bachelor or higher degree compared to 9.7% across Cardinia. 7.5% have achieved an advanced diploma or diploma and 22.7% have vocational qualifications, compared with 6.6% and 21.5% respectively across Cardinia. The top three industries which Gembrook residents are employed in are:

- Manufacturing (16.3%)
- Construction (11%)
- Health care and social assistance (10%)

Figure 10: Employment by industry



Source: Cardinia Community Profile; www.id.com.au

5.3. Business profile

Gembrook represents 3.3% of the Shire's business community by count of businesses. Gembrook has 467 businesses and there are 14,029 businesses in total in the Shire. The largest number of businesses are involved in the construction industry (115 businesses) followed by agriculture, forestry and fishing (51) and professional, scientific and technical services (32).

Source: ABR count of businesses June 2010.

5.4. Council's vision for economic development

Council's vision for economic development, as outlined in the Council plan 2009 – 2013, is to “create and support local employment and business opportunities for our community and the wider region”.

5.5. Gembrook Business Group

The Gembrook Business Group (GBG) is comprised of business people from the Gembrook area who are working together to achieve a common goal of growing business in the Gembrook Village. The group operates independently but receives council officer support and is eligible for Cardinia Business Partnership Program (CBPP) grants. The establishment of the GBG was made possible through a Victorian Government Street Life program grant, and Cardinia Shire Council. The vision of the group is *“The business community of Gembrook is committed to providing excellence in service and quality of products for the local catchment and visitors to our village. We will work together to promote Gembrook as a place to work, live and play.”* One of the main aims of the group is to promote local business and increase customer loyalty. The GBG has established the Gembrook Village www.gembrookvillage.com.au web site. A comprehensive website which includes a business directory, a community directory, local news, and events. Membership to the GBG is open to all businesses operating within the Gembrook area.

5.6. Town centre

Gembrook Main Street:

Development in Main Street Gembrook is somewhat scattered, leaving the town without a cohesive feel. The Main Street is broken up, particularly on the north side by vacant land and residential properties. There are a reasonable number of commercial businesses in Main Street Gembrook however due to the fact that they are spread over quite a large area, the centre lacks a true “Main Street” feel.

The Gembrook town centre is anchored by an IGA supermarket which provides residents with a reasonable range of supermarket merchandise, particularly for its floor size, but it is not considered to be a full-line supermarket. As a result, residents are required to travel further afield to larger centres for such facilities. Other shops which meet the day to day needs of residents include the bakery and the newsagent/post office. More specialist services and goods are provided by the Hairdressing salon, the Veterinary practice and the stock feed and supplies store. There is also a moderate array of speciality food shops including a fish and chip shop, a pizza shop, an Indian restaurant, and some cafés.

One of the longest standing buildings and businesses in Gembrook is the Ranges Hotel, which was built around the turn of the century. The Ranges Hotel is now a heritage listed building, protected under the Cardinia Planning Scheme. Feedback from the Gembrook community indicates that there is a strong community desire to see this pub restored to its former glory and to become a major attracter for the town.

5.7. Tourism

Currently, the number and types of businesses in Gembrook typically involved in providing product and services to visitors are:

- Food retailing – 27
- Accommodation – 6
- Food and beverage services – 11
- Arts and recreation services – 11
- Personal and other services – 12

These businesses will need to ensure that they can effectively compete with other destinations by continually differentiating themselves and developing high yielding and high quality products and services along with a superior level of customer service. Opportunities exist for business training, up skilling and networking from Council's annual business training program.

There would be considerable benefit from the business community engaging with residents to ensure there is involvement and support from the community in tourism promotion and development. Council can assist by leveraging from Destination Melbourne's Visiting Friends and Relatives campaign. This campaign builds on host/resident awareness of things to see and do in a municipality.

Puffing Billy

Puffing Billy is a narrow gauge railway line which runs from Belgrave to Gembrook, a distance of 24km (SGS Economics, 2009). Puffing Billy first began operation in 1900 and "with the opening of the railway line to Gembrook there was a great upsurge in milling activity" (Parker, 1995, pg. 55). According to McCarthy (1987) "the importance of the railway to Gembrook cannot be overstated for, had the railway not been built, the township of Gembrook would not have developed at all (pg. 1). The steam train ceased commercial operation in 1953 due to a landslide, but re-emerged in the 1970s as the Puffing Billy tourist train from Belgrave to Emerald. In 1998 Puffing Billy returned to Gembrook (SGS Economics, 2009).

Although Puffing Billy is a significant tourism attraction, carrying some 260,000 passengers each year (SGS Economics, 2009), the flow on economic benefits for Gembrook are currently fairly minimal. Of those who travel on Puffing Billy, only 10% take the full trip to Gembrook, with these being mostly railway enthusiasts (SGS and Tweeddale, 2010). Over the summer months Puffing Billy comes to Gembrook every day but during winter months, trains run to Gembrook only on weekends and school holidays. Once in Gembrook, there is only one train for passengers to catch to return back to Belgrave so their time in Gembrook is fixed at 1hr and 50 minutes. Rather than being restricted by the Puffing Billy Timetable, there is the option for passengers to take the Puffing Billy train one way and the public bus the other which would allow visitors more time to spend in Gembrook.

Currently all Puffing Billy train services begin and terminate at Belgrave station. Future use of Gembrook as a terminus station is currently being considered by the Emerald Tourist Railway Board but this would require the construction of additional facilities to store and maintain locomotives. The Board intends to begin operating two services a day from Gembrook to Lakeside or Emerald in late 2011. This would allow the opportunity to promote Gembrook as a more convenient option for starting a ride on Puffing Billy, particularly to those in the South-East growth corridor and West Gippsland. This would also give people two options for their return journey and allow those only wishing to take a partial trip on Puffing Billy the option of seeing the Gembrook to Emerald section.

Parks and forests:

Bunyip State Park is a major attracter for nature enthusiasts located in close proximity to the Gembrook Township. Visitors to Bunyip State Park can enjoy:

- Exploring and experiencing the beautiful natural bush setting.

- Undertaking any one of the many great walks, varying in complexity from easy to difficult.
- A picnic lunch at Mortimer or Dyers Picnic Ground.
- Exploring the Four Brothers Rocks.
- Camping

Adjoining Bunyip State Park is Kurth Kiln Regional Park. Visitors to Kurth Kiln Regional Park can see the historical charcoal kiln utilised during World War II, which is located at Kurth Kiln Picnic Ground. Friends of Kurth Kiln, a volunteer group which officially started in 1999, aims to preserve and maintain the Kiln site and to promote greater awareness of its historic and cultural significance. In April each year the Kurth Kiln heritage festival is held where the heritage of the site is celebrated with displays, demonstrations, performances and activities for young and old to take part in.



Kurth Kiln

Within the township itself is Gembrook Park. Gembrook Park is managed by Council with the assistance of the “friends of Gembrook Park” group. Gembrook Park provides the main area of remnant vegetation within the town, being part of the Acclimatisation Park which existed in the area in the late 1800s. One can enjoy a number of trails throughout the park and a picnic lunch at the picnic ground. Currently access to the picnic ground is challenging, as the only designated access is via some overgrown stairs. As a catalyst action of this strategy a new path and signage will be put in to provide clear access for people of all abilities.

Gembrook Market:

The Gembrook Market is highly valued by the local community. It operates alongside the Puffing Billy Station in Gembrook on the 4th Sunday of the month (except December) between 9:00am and 3:00pm. Entry to the market is free and is promoted as family friendly. The array of stalls is quite varied, from local produce to antiques. The Market also has an education focus on sustainability issues and ideas. Many different groups and individuals have provided displays at the market and talked to visitors on ways to support sustainability.



Gembrook Market

Accommodation

Visitor accommodation in the Gembrook area is primarily limited to Bed and Breakfasts or bush camping. Both Kurth Kiln Regional Park and Bunyip State Park provide bush camping opportunities. There are no bookings required or fees for camping at Bunyip State Park or Kurth Kiln Regional Park. The camping areas operate on a first-in first-served basis all year round. There is a need for more family friendly low cost accommodation in the hills area. Some of this need may be able to be met by the operators of Gilwell Park in the future as they intend to develop a small number of caravan camping sites with appropriate facilities.

Events

Gembrook needs to become more of a destination. Events that occur in and around Gembrook on an annual basis include: the Kids Fun Run with Thomas, The All American Car Festival, and the Kurth Kiln Heritage Festival. In order to bring more people into the town there is a desire to establish more annual events in Gembrook. Suggestions included a Billy Cart Race, a Moonlit Cinema, a potato festival, or some other food focussed festival. Such an event would need to have a strong commitment from the community for it to run but could be organised in partnership with Council or another organisation such as Puffing Billy.

The future expansion of Puffing Billy to include additional services from Gembrook should be celebrated and embraced with a launch festival as this will bring a great many more visitors and associated tourist dollars to the town. A launch event will be a great opportunity to promote Gembrook as a tourism location as well as a wonderful opportunity to bring the community together. The success of such an event will depend on active support from all stakeholders.

Regional context

The journey to Gembrook is in itself a wonderful experience, driving through rolling hillsides and admiring beautiful views. The rich red soils and the patchwork of the agricultural land make a significant contribution to the beauty of the landscapes. This coupled with the remnant vegetation along the roadsides makes the experience of travelling to Gembrook truly memorable.

There is a strong desire amongst the community to be able to experience the journey to Gembrook on foot or bicycle via the proposed Emerald to Gembrook trail. The Emerald to Gembrook trail has potential to become a great draw card for the area much like the Warburton Rail Trail in the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

5.8. Gateways and signage

There is concern that there is not enough tourist signage directing visitors to Gembrook. There have been requests that signage be placed on the Pakenham bypass to direct people to Gembrook. Such signs are under the control of VicRoads. Council has been informed by VicRoads that they will only advise of the towns immediately accessible from the freeway on their signs.

It has been observed that visitors to Gembrook, particularly those that arrive on Puffing Billy are unaware of the many interesting places to visit and things to do in Gembrook. There is a great opportunity to encourage visitors to Gembrook to move around the whole town centre rather than just the Puffing Billy yard through the provision of easy to read “way finding” signage. Such signs would advise visitors as to where in the town they were currently and what other wonderful places there were to visit. Through providing average walking times, the signs would allow people to accurately plan their visit so as they were back in time for their departing train, but would also alert people to how many other places there were to visit in Gembrook within walking distance of the Puffing Billy Station. The signs should be of the same style as the heritage boards in JAC Russel Park.

There is a desire to signify the main entry points to Gembrook with a distinct gateway treatment. One suggested idea has been a landscaping treatment which incorporates logs, rocks and native vegetation. Another has been to provide a picnic table or other seat as a symbol of welcoming people. The key Gateways have been identified as the intersection of Belgrave-Gembrook Road and Station Road at the western end of the town, in the western road reserve on Gembrook Road near the intersection with Main Street at the southern approach to town, and on the south side of the Pack Track on Gembrook-Launching Place Road at the northern approach to town. Council will work with the community further to identify what the treatments should include.

It has been suggested that Puffing Billy should be promoted at the entries to Gembrook. This would need to be organised in conjunction with the Emerald Tourist Railway Board. It has also been suggested that banner poles should be erected on the side of the main roads in key locations in the area to allow for temporary signage to promote various events throughout the year. It is considered that these should be placed at the western and southern entry points to the township. As both these roads are controlled by VicRoads, their support will need to be sought before such poles could be erected.

5.9. Agriculture and horticulture

Much of the land surrounding the immediate Gembrook township is used for agricultural and horticultural purposes. Historically, potato growing has been the main form of agriculture in Gembrook, with an excellent reputation for high quality produce based on strong consumer demand for brushed potatoes from the red soil country. In 1995 Gembrook accounted for around 4 percent of Victoria’s potato growing area, producing around 10 000 tonnes and occupying 400 hectares.

Unfortunately the area has been faced with major difficulties over the last 30 years. Dieldrin is present in the red soils and much of the area is also affected by an organism called the Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN). These two separate problems have combined to create an immensely difficult situation for many growers

Gembrook is located within the Yarra Valley - Dandenong Ranges green wedge. The significant features of this green wedge include:

- Areas of environmental and landscape qualities
- State and National parks
- Native vegetation, fauna habitat
- Areas of productive agricultural potential

Cardinia Shire Council, in partnership with the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) and the Northern Ranges Community, is currently preparing the Northern Ranges Green Wedge Management plan. This plan will evaluate the current and possible future uses of the land in the Cardinia portion of the Yarra Valley – Dandenong Ranges Green Wedge (known as the Northern Ranges) which is outside the main townships. Completion of the Northern Ranges Green Wedge Management Plan is a high priority for the wider district.

5.10. Economic development opportunities

It has been identified that the tourism offer that the Hills region could provide is under appreciated at the moment. There is a great opportunity that exists to market Gembrook and the Hills region as a whole to the rapidly increasing population in the Casey Cardinia growth corridor for day trips and short getaways. It was thought that it would be best to approach tourism from a regional view and prepare a tourism strategy for the Ranges Ward as a whole rather than for each township in isolation.

There is the opportunity for the Gembrook Business group to participate in the Cardinia Business Partnership Program (CBPP). The CBPP gives the opportunity for business groups within the Shire to apply for a grant of up to \$3500 on a dollar for dollar basis to develop projects which strengthen the local economy and contribute to employment growth.

Charlottes Café in Main Street currently provides visitor information as an add-on to their café business. This service is valued however the community would like to see a dedicated Visitor Information Centre established in Gembrook which could also show case the rich history of the area. A tourism strategy for the Hills region would help strategically assess the local location and types of best visitor information centres. Depending on the findings, one of these centres could be located in Gembrook. There would then be a need to find a suitable space to house such a facility and possibly volunteers to run it.

Future retail and commercial development:

The Gembrook community has expressed mixed feelings about the future development of businesses in Gembrook. Although there is great support for providing for more local jobs, it is important to make sure that future commercial development and tourist appeal does not detrimentally affect the “country town” feel that Gembrook has to offer.

In the case of heritage listed buildings in Main Street (see section 11.3), consideration will be given to allowing uses which might not have otherwise been entertained if it can be demonstrated that the use is consistent with the historical use of the building. It would need to be established that the use proposed was a “re-use” of the building and the historical link would need to be clearly demonstrated. In such cases additional interruptions to the streetscape like roller doors and loading bays would still be discouraged however existing roller doors and access ways would not be required to be removed.

The Gembrook community has identified a need for the provision of more services within the town. In particular, there is a strong calling for a medical practitioner which would help support seniors remaining in town. One idea suggested was for a “clinic bus” to be established which could have multiple medical services operating out of it and would be able to service several towns in Cardinia. Other desired services include a pharmacy, a crèche or day care facility, and visitor accommodation. There is an aspiration within the community to increase the available opportunities for Gembrook residents to be able to work within Gembrook rather than having to travel outside of the town for employment.

Potential Industrial zoned land:

There is presently no industrial zoned land in Emerald, Cockatoo or Gembrook. This is seen as a problem by members of the community as there is no where for light industrial or farming service businesses to establish themselves in the hills region. There is a desire to see a designated area for light industrial uses in the Gembrook region which can provide services to the community without impacting on the landscape and amenity of the town. One suggested location for such uses is the land adjacent to the intersection of Belgrave-Gembrook Road, Ure Road and Station Street, this location was a saw mill site historically, as well as the lot opposite which is currently operating as a garden supplies business. These two lots are identified on the Framework Plan (Figure 6) of this strategy as investigation areas for light industrial purposes.

It is not envisaged that this land would be appropriate for large scale manufacturing or offensive types of industrial uses, but rather it would allow the opportunity for uses such as the landscape supplies business (which is operating under existing use rights) and other services to locate within the region. By providing such locations on the outskirts of town, this relieves pressure for these uses trying to operate in the Main Street. The exact zoning sought is likely to be Industrial 3 Zoning.

It is anticipated that there will not be any additional impact on the residential properties to the east of the sites. There is already an existing garage and service station between the existing residential properties and the subject sites to be investigated for rezoning. By rezoning these properties for commercial purposes this will help to better link the township to the sports ground which is currently somewhat separated from the rest of the township

It must also be recognised when assessing applications for uses and construction on these sites that they are at the western gateway to the township and must still reflect the character of Gembrook and respect the surrounding landscape. It is important that any future development is well articulated and visually interesting given their prominent position. Development design should also provide for passive surveillance of the proposed trail which will abut both sites.

Precincts:

Figure 11 below shows the three main precincts which make up the commercial town centre of Gembrook. In order to consolidate the town centre, future retail and commercial development should be located within the central retail precinct. The eastern end of Main Street should be the focus for community facilities to complement the community centre and would also be appropriate for medical services, a child care centre, offices, or tourist accommodation given that this precinct includes a number of existing residential dwellings and is less suited to intensive retail activity. Any future residential development in the central retail precinct and the arts and community precinct should not be traditional residential development or prominent ground floor residential development rather it should be located in secondary areas like the backs of shops. Further detail regarding design guidelines can be found in Chapter 12.

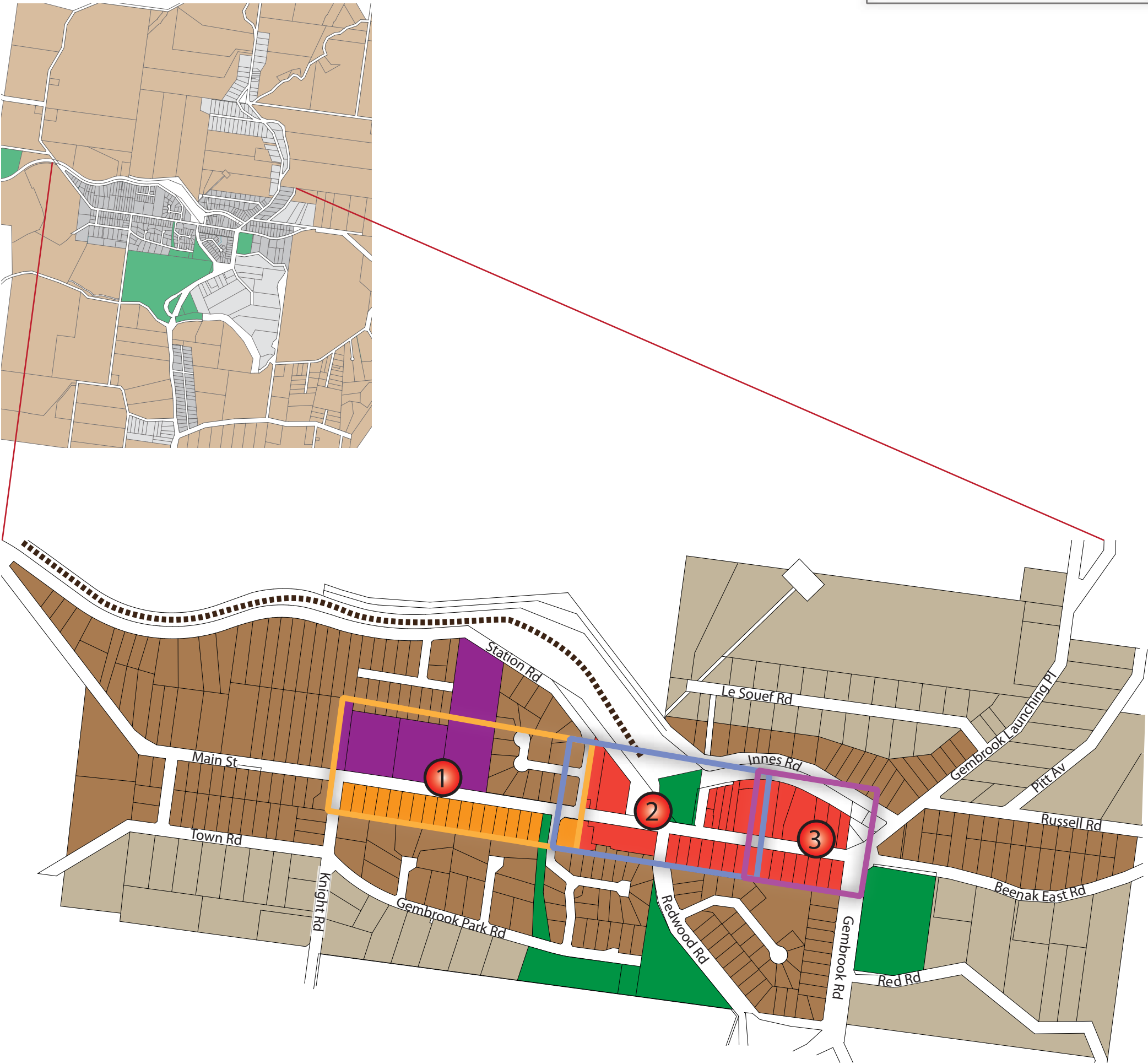
Table 1: Precincts land use table

Precinct	Preferred land use	Inappropriate/incompatible land use
Service & Mixed Use Precinct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued service industry use Offices Educational services Medium density residential development Tourist accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail and commercial
Central Retail Precinct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active uses that attract daily pedestrian activity such as continued retail and commercial uses, i.e. shops and key service providers. Active uses that promote evening and weekend activity such as cafes and restaurants Tourism activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-active uses Uses that require vehicle access from the street frontage (i.e. petrol station, car wash, drive through bottle shop or car sales yard) “Traditional” residential development or ground floor residential development at the frontage.
Arts & Community Precinct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community and cultural uses Tourist accommodation Medical services Offices Tourism activities Medium density residential development located behind another use preferred in the precinct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-active uses Uses that require vehicle access from the street frontage such as petrol station, drive through bottle shop or car sales yard “Traditional” residential development or ground floor residential development at the frontage.

Figure 11

Central Precincts

Gembrook Township Strategy



1:7000 @ A3



Puffing Billy



Residential



Low Density Residential



Mixed Use



Retail & Business



Primary School



Reserve



Services & Mix Use Precinct



Central Retail Precinct



Arts & Community Precinct



Revitalisation of Main Street:

There is a desire in the community to see Main Street revitalised and works done to improve the streetscape. Currently there is a mix of footpath and nature strip surfaces, the street furniture is dilapidated and there are large gaps between some of the street trees. The wide nature of the road surface creates an intimidating pedestrian environment especially given there are no defined pedestrian crossing points. It is considered that a streetscape renewal scheme is needed for Main Street to make it a more pleasant, pedestrian friendly and inviting environment. Main Street is an arterial road and as such any proposed streetscape works need to be approved by VicRoads. VicRoads safety regulations prohibit Council from planting any further Oak trees in Main Street as trees planted within 4m of the road need to have a maximum mature trunk diameter of 100mm. Appendix A gives a preliminary indication of what the streetscape improvements may include.

5.11. Key issues

- Development in Main Street Gembrook is somewhat scattered, leaving the town without a cohesive feel.
- There is great support for providing for more local jobs, however it is important to make sure that future commercial development and tourist appeal does not detrimentally affect the “country town” feel that Gembrook has to offer.
- There is a need for more services in the town, particularly a medical practitioner
- There is nowhere for light industrial businesses to establish themselves in the hills region
- There is a need for family friendly, low cost, holiday accommodation in the hills area
- Visitors to Gembrook, particularly those that arrive on Puffing Billy are unaware of the many great places to visit and things to do in Gembrook

5.12. Objectives

- Establish an attractive, low speed, pedestrian friendly environment throughout the town centre.
- Enhance and consolidate the town centre
- Increase local employment opportunities.
- Improve opportunities for services, events and activities for both short and long stay visitors.
- Provide for light industrial land uses to service the township.
- Facilitate developments respectful of the existing township character and the surrounding landscape.

5.13. Policy

- Facilitate development in Main Street in accordance with the Gembrook Township Framework Plan and the Precincts Land Use Table.
- Encourage the establishment of a medical practitioner in Gembrook.
- Encourage and support the establishment of a Visitor Information Centre in Gembrook.
- Leverage from Destination Melbourne’s Visiting Friends and Relatives campaign that builds on host/ resident awareness of things to see and do in their municipality.
- Promote services, events and activities for visitors. Assist local businesses to offer an attractive product for visitors.

5.14. Actions

- Investigate rezoning land around the intersection of Belgrave-Gembrook Road, Ure Road and Station Street for light industrial purposes as identified in the Gembrook Township Framework Plan.
- In partnership with the Emerald Tourist Railway Board and the Gembrook Community, support the preparation of a launch event for the commencement of additional Puffing Billy services from Gembrook.
- Provide “way finding” signage to encourage visitors to explore the town.
- Seek VicRoads support for the erecting of banner poles at the entry points to Gembrook on Belgrave-Gembrook Road and Gembrook Road.
- In consultation with the community, provide a gateway treatment at the northern, southern and western entries to Gembrook.
- In partnership with the community prepare a tourism strategy for the hills region.
- Revitalise Main Street through a streetscape renewal scheme including replacing the street furniture throughout Main Street and in JAC Russel Park.
- Provide business training opportunities to enhance the management and marketing skills of tourist operators.
- Support networking opportunities for local businesses to engage with each other to learn and support each other.

6. COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING

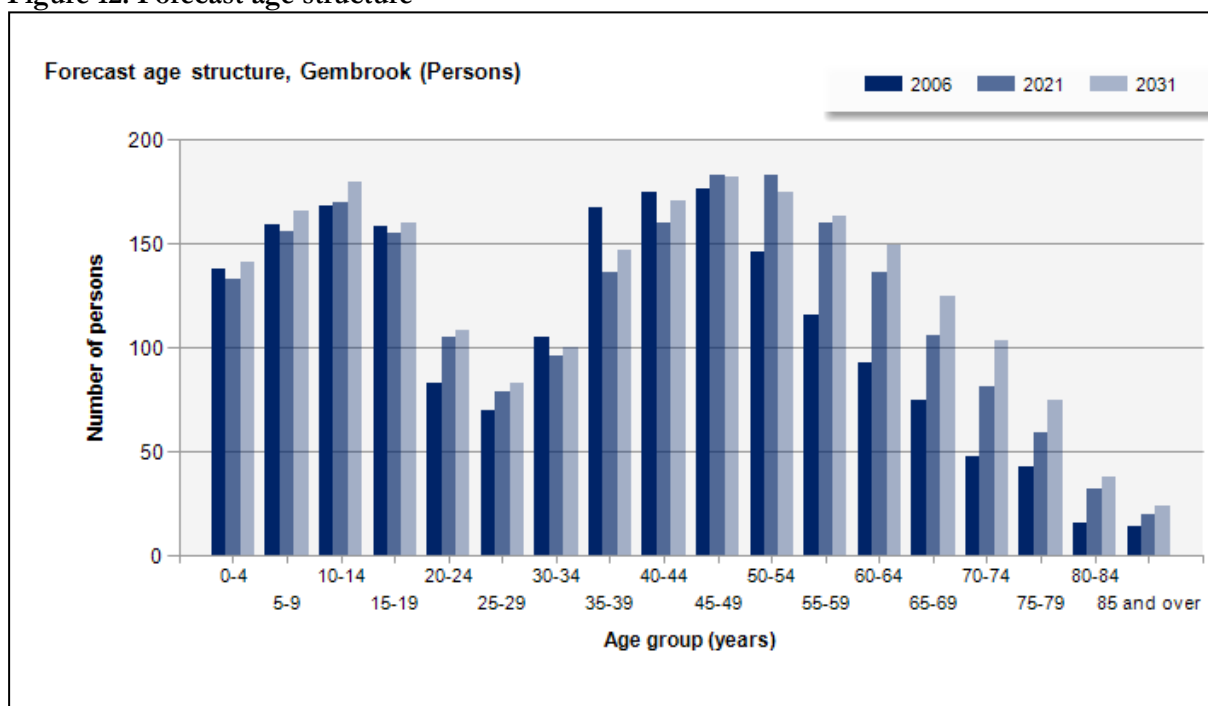
6.1. Overview

Gembrook is described by the locals as a peaceful country town with great community spirit. There is a desire to make sure that everyone in the community feels welcome and a part of the community. This chapter explores the services and facilities that are available in and around Gembrook and also identifies needs for additional services and facilities as well as opportunities for community strengthening. It is acknowledged that many of the great services and facilities in Gembrook are community based and run by local volunteers. There is a strong base of volunteers in the Gembrook community but new volunteers are always welcome and needed.

6.2. Community profile

In 2006, Gembrook had a population of approximately 1,898 residents and 639 households representing about 3.3% of Cardinia Shire's total population. The community is predominantly made up of family households, with there being a large percentage of people in the 0 - 18 and 35-59 age groups. The average household size in Gembrook is 2.84 people which is slightly larger than that of Cardinia Shire as a whole. There has been a recent influx in population numbers in Gembrook as a result of a number of new lots being created through Greenfield subdivision. Between 2001 and 2006 the population increased from 1,708 people to 1,898 people, this is in contrast to a drop in population numbers between 1991 and 1996 from 1676 to 1630 people. Whilst the number of people in the age groups under 50 is predicted to remain fairly stable over the next 20 years, it can be seen in Figure 12 below that there is going to be a significant increase in the number of people in the age groups over 50.

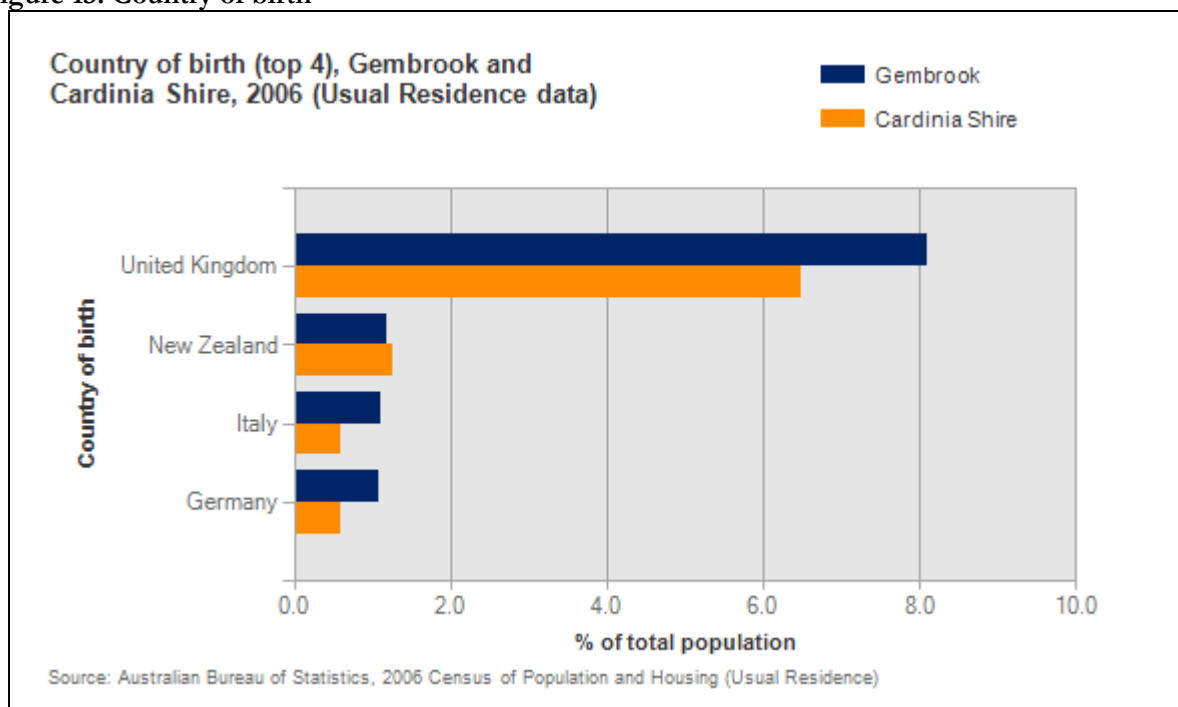
Figure 12: Forecast age structure



Source: Cardinia Community and Household Forecasts; www.id.com.au

The majority of those living in Gembrook were born in Australia. Of those who were born overseas, the top four most common countries nominated in the 2006 ABS census were: United Kingdom (8.1%), New Zealand (1.2%), Italy (1.1%), and Germany (1.1%). Overall, 16% of the Gembrook population in 2006 were born overseas, which was higher than the average across the Shire as a whole which was 14.2%. The majority of Gembrook residents speak English well and 15.1% of residents speak English and another language well.

Figure 13: Country of birth

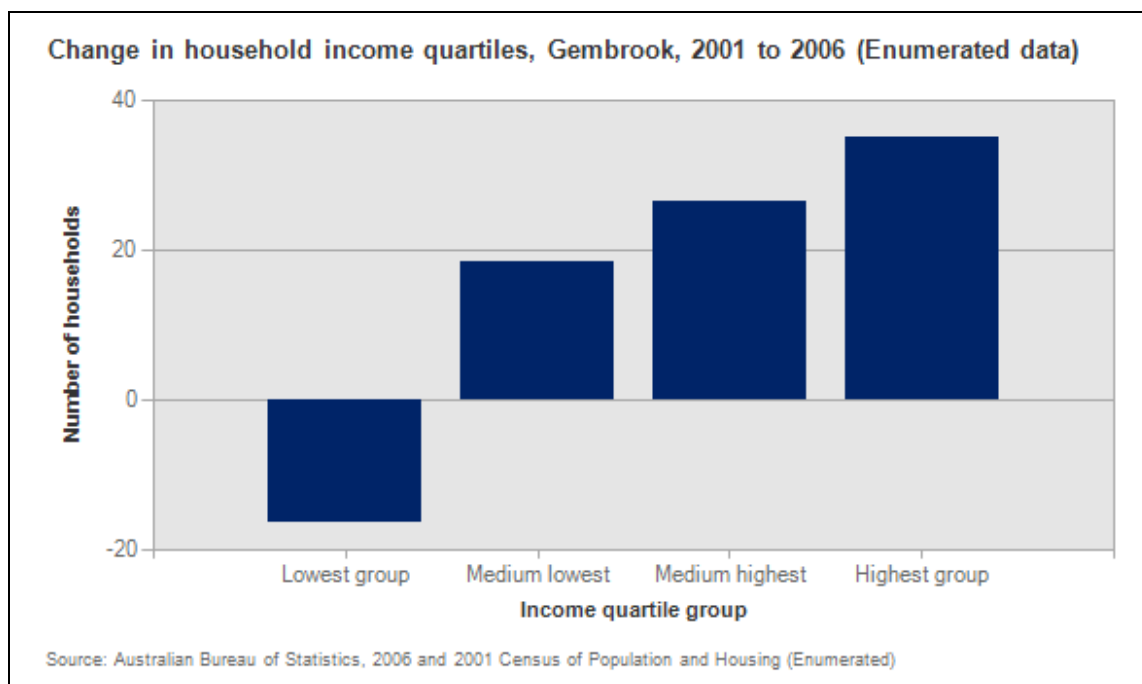


Source: Cardinia Community Profile; www.id.com.au

The most commonly nominated religion for Gembrook residents in 2006 was Catholic (18%). Overall, 47.8% of residents nominated themselves as being Christian, 1.1%, as another non Christian religion, 33.4% as not having any religion and 16.4 % didn't respond to that question in the Census. When compared with Cardinia as a whole, there are fewer people in Gembrook who follow a religion and more people who have no religion at all.

On average, Gembrook residents earn a reasonable weekly household income. Most households are in the medium highest household income quartile. Between 2001 and 2006 there was a strong increase in the number of households in the highest income quartile and a decrease in the number in the lowest income quartile.

Figure 14: Change in household income quartiles



Source: Cardinia Community Profile; www.id.com.au

6.3. Community atmosphere

Gembrook is described by the locals as a peaceful country town with great community spirit. There is a supportive community base and people look out for each other. The atmosphere is friendly and relaxed and people feel safe around town. The open space and natural environment are highly valued and there is a keen interest in sustainable living among many of the locals.

With the recent influx of new dwellings and residents into Gembrook there is a desire to encourage new residents to feel welcome and to become involved in the local community. Council, in partnership with the community, will work to prepare a “welcome to Gembrook” information sheet that could be distributed to new residents in the community. Other initiatives that could be taken to help unite the community could include:

- A community art/mural project
- A regular welcome of new residents in the Gembrook Times
- A local festival

6.4. Existing services and facilities

Gembrook is serviced by a range of community services and facilities, many of which are community based rather than provided by state agencies or Cardinia Shire Council. This can be attributed to the strong sense of community spirit which is a highly valued characteristic of the Gembrook community. The services and facilities presently available in Gembrook are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Existing community services and facilities and their functions

Service Type	Groups, services and facilities
Early childhood services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gembrook Playgroup • Playgroups in the park
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gembrook Primary School • Cardinia mobile library
Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gembrook Pre-School (Kindergarden) • After school hours care
Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MYBus (Mobile Youth Bus) • Skate Park • Teenage School Holiday Program (pick up and drop off points in Gembrook) • Interest based programs (mural projects etc)
Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gembrook Craft group • Gembrook Singers • Gembrook Bowlers • The Brookers – Gembrook & Cockatoo football and netball club. • Gembrook cricket club • Gembrook riding club • 1st Gembrook Scout Group
Aged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gembrook senior citizens
Churches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gembrook Anglican Church • Gembrook Catholic Church • Gembrook Uniting Church
Community services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gembrook times • Gembrook Community Centre • Country Fire Authority (CFA)
Free internet service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardinia Mobile Library • MyBus – Cardinia mobile youth bus
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Returned Services League (RSL) • Gembrook Township Committee • Gembrook Business group • Gembrook market • Gembrook cemetery trust • Friends of Gembrook Park • Friends of Kurth Kiln • Friends of Bunyip State Park • Gembrook Flora and Fauna Friends Group

Source: Cardinia Shire Council

Given that Gembrook is a reasonably small rural town, not all services and facilities are available within the town itself but most are available within the wider hills region. Some of the additional groups, services and facilities within the hills area which are accessed by Gembrook residents are listed in Table 3 below. A balance needs to be struck between providing adequate services and facilities and keeping the small town charm of Gembrook.

Table 3: Additional groups, services and facilities accessed by Gembrook Residents

Groups, services and facilities	Location
Emerald and District Rotary Club	Clematis
Hills Community Gardens	Cockatoo
Hills Men's shed	Cockatoo
Lions Club	Emerald
Maternal and Child Health Service	Cockatoo
Cardinia Hills Ragwort and Landcare Group	Cockatoo
1 st Cockatoo Guides	Cockatoo
Cardinia Hills Ragwort and Landcare Group	
Southern Ranges Environmental Alliance (SREA)	Southern Ranges
Emerald secondary College	Emerald
Cockatoo indoor sports centre	Cockatoo

Source: Cardinia Shire Council

6.5. Gembrook Township Committee and Gembrook Times

Gembrook Township Committee commenced in 2001, after a township meeting decided that a local action group was required. Made up of local residents and delegates from local community organisations, the role of the committee is to get things done for Gembrook and its community groups. This is achieved through active involvement with Local, State and Federal governments and government departments, as well as other not-for-profit agencies.

As a forum for discussion of ideas and facilitator of new initiatives in the community, the Township Committee is often involved in supporting new projects, or lobbying in support of them. The agenda for the Committee is set by its members and therefore consists of whatever is important to community members and groups who contribute their time and energy to the Committee. New members and community group delegates are always welcome

Examples of projects that the Gembrook Township Committee has encouraged, supported or implemented over the last decade include.:

<p><i>Information/ Communication</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome Kit for new residents • Mud Map for visitors to town • Input into Heritage signs project in JAC Russell Park • Improved signage in town • Worked with local residents to develop a Gembrook logo • Assisted formation of 'Gemtimes' newsletter <p><i>Representing Gembrook to Govt & Govt agencies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy for better road maintenance • Lobbied for funding in support of Adventure playground volunteers • Successfully lobbied VicRoads for upgrade to Gembrook/Pakenham Rd • Contributed to 'Gembrook Rural Review' • Lobbied State Govt. and won \$30K funding for Green Wedge Management Plan. Input 	<p><i>Events/ Tourism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted operation of Gembrook Market 2004-2010 • Input into efforts to keep Puffing Billy operating to Gembrook regularly • Worked with Emerald & District Rotary Club & Puffing Billy to establish 'Kid's fun run with Thomas' event • Ran inaugural 'Community Afternoon' community building event in 2010 <p><i>Planning for the future</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input into Gembrook Township Strategy • Input into sewage rollout with Yarra Valley Water • Input into new housing development • Support for establishment of Bendigo Bank Community Bank in Cockatoo • Emphasised importance of
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into Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted local resident campaign for bus service to Pakenham • Lobbied Telstra to set up ADSL in Gembrook exchange 	telecommunications improvements in district in Municipal Strategic Statement – to attract early rollout of NBN <p>Working with other communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member group of ‘4 towns’ (Gembrook, Cockatoo, Emerald & Upper Beaconsfield) multi-township forum
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The *Gembrook Times* is a community newsletter launched in 2005 to provide information to the community of Gembrook and district, promote the exchange of information for the benefit of the general community and publicise the activities of community groups and residents, especially volunteers. The *Times* is formally a sub-committee of the Gembrook Township Committee. The *Times* has a regular team of volunteers but welcomes contributions from readers.

6.6. Physical accessibility

There has been in the past some feelings of isolation expressed by Gembrook residents regarding a lack of connection with the southern parts of the Shire and the Council itself. It is hoped that the recent opening of the route 840 Gembrook – Pakenham bus service will help to reduce this feeling. It is important that community members utilise this bus service and the route 695 Belgrave-Gembrook bus service to ensure their continuation into the future. One great initiative that some local community members have taken advantage of is the free travel on weekends for pensioners which allows you to travel all over Melbourne at minimal cost to you.

6.7. Children

As can be seen in Figure 12 above, Children make up a significant portion of the Gembrook community. The number of young families and the close relationships with other parents is something that is valued by the community.

Gembrook is considered by the community to be a great place to raise a family in a supportive and close knit environment. Isolation from social services is an issue for families in Gembrook and there is a need to travel in order to access some services. Council recognises the importance of making sure that families are connected with support services and early learning programs to ensure their children are given the best start to life possible and as such, through initiatives such as the mobile PlayStart Van, Council is bringing services to communities.

Maternal and Child Health Services are free for families residing in Cardinia Shire who have children aged from birth to school age, providing support to parents and offering information and advice on issues related to child health and development, parenting, maternal health and wellbeing, as well as providing group programs. New mums are usually contacted within a week of being discharged from hospital to arrange a home visit. Following this, key ages and stages visits are undertaken at the Maternal and Child Health Centre, McBride Street Cockatoo. New parents are welcome to attend new parent groups held in Cockatoo and Emerald.

Gembrook is in the fortunate position of having both a successful community run playgroup and a Council facilitated supported playgroup run from the PlayStart Van, an initiative to run playgroups in local parks. The community playgroup operates every Tuesday (except school and public holidays) between 9:15am and 11:15am at the Gembrook Community Centre and is for children 0-5 years. Playgroups in the park operate every 2nd Friday from 10:00am – 12:00 midday at JAC Russel Park or Gembrook Community Centre in wet weather conditions.

The PlayStart Van was funded through the Cardinia Shire’s Best Start project and Supported Playgroup and Parent Initiative and offers parenting support and connecting families in a playgroup environment.

Gembrook has a state funded kindergarten which offers programs for both 3 and 4 year olds. In consultation with the parent volunteer committee of management, enrolment numbers are increasing, a

direct reflection of the number of new families moving into the community. Currently children are eligible for 10.75 state funded hours of 4 year old kindergarten per week. Three year old kindergarten is not a state funded program, except for some eligible families in the early start, aboriginal or refugee status. From 2013, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) committed to increasing state funding to 15 hours of kindergarten per week for children the year prior to school entry, which may impact on current service delivery models.

Research conducted through the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) of children in their first year of school across Australia, published in May 2010, indicates that with regards to physical health and well being, 8.7% of children surveyed in Gembrook were considered to be developmentally vulnerable, compared to a state average of 7.7%. 17.4% were considered to be developmentally at risk, compared to 11.7% as a Victorian average. In an effort to increase the rate of children who participate in physical activity, the Cardinia Shire's Best Start Partnership developed physical activity kits for children to take home with them on a borrow and return basis. These kits are available for all families attending the Gembrook kindergarten.

AEDI results showed that Gembrook preps have excellent cognitive and language based skills. This could be attributed to the high uptake of playgroup and kindergarten services in the community.

Council currently offers an after school hours care program at the Gembrook Primary school. This program is available between 3:30 and 6:30 and offers fully supervised care in a fun and friendly environment.

6.8. Young people

The Youth Policy and Youth Strategy demonstrate Council's desire to support young people to achieve their goals and aspirations and be active, valued members of the community. The Cardinia Shire Council Youth Policy and Youth Strategy is focused on improving the overall health and wellbeing of young people and aims to provide diversity and opportunities which support and connect young people to family, community, education and employment. One of the initiatives to come out of the 2007 – 2011 Youth Policy and Strategy was the development of the Cardinia Shire Council Mobile Youth Bus (MYBus). MYBus outreaches to young people in rural townships. MYBus has outreached to young people into the township of Gembrook both during a school term in 2010 and during school holidays.

Young people in Gembrook have the opportunity to participate in Council's Teenage School Holiday Program. There is a pick-up and drop off location within Gembrook to ensure that the program is accessible to young people. Four activities are held each school holiday period.

Young people in Gembrook presently have access to a large regional skate park, various sporting clubs and facilities, recreational open space and social clubs. Activities for young people in Gembrook of an evening are fairly limited and those wishing to access evening entertainment facilities are required to travel outside of Gembrook. There is a community desire to see more activities offered for young people within Gembrook. These include but are not limited to hosting a FReeZA event at the Gembrook Community Centre and holding Skate/BMX/Scooter competitions or demonstrations at the Gembrook Skate Park.

Cardinia Shire Council Youth Services are committed to ensuring that young people in rural townships have the opportunity to participate in interest based programs. In 2010 Cardinia Shire Council Youth Services worked with a professional artist and students from Gembrook Primary School to develop a mural for the school.

6.9. Ageing in place

The older population is changing, with different trends and needs from generations past. People are living longer, and have different plans for their later years than previous generations, such as staying at home independently as long as possible. Cardinia Shire will have some very specific needs and challenges due to population composition and demographics, existing geography and community infrastructure challenges.

Cardinia Shire Council is in the less common position of not directly delivering the majority of human services to the mature aged population. The home and community care services that are habitually delivered by local councils in other areas are provided by an outside provider in Cardinia, namely Mecwacare. Mecwacare provides quality in home support and care to promote independence and well being for people of all ages and abilities. Mecwacare's home support services include:

- Personal care – Daily tasks like showering, dressing, grooming, preparing meals and shopping.
- Home care – Help with general household tasks including cleaning, vacuuming, dusting, laundry, and ironing is available seven days per week.
- Respite care – Respite includes help with light household tasks, personal care or companionship. Respite is usually to give the person who is caring for someone a break from caring to enjoy some leisure time or to attend to tasks that cannot be performed with the care recipient.
- Community Transport – Mecwacare Pakenham provides assistance with transport to eligible clients residing in Cardinia Shire. This is a door - to - door service operating Monday to Friday 8am – 5pm. Transport is provided primarily for medical appointments.
- Home maintenance – Mecwacare can assist with minor repairs around the home and basic maintenance. A home modification service including installation of rails and ramps is available following assessment by an occupational therapist

In 2009, Council adopted the Cardinia Shire Council Positive Ageing Strategy 2009-2012 which has an over-riding theme of "Living Well for Life". The strategy captures the following key themes and a 'Strategy Action Plan' has been developed to deliver outcomes for the community:

- Your Community - Volunteering & Community Participation
- Built Environment
- Transport
- Health & Wellbeing
- Lifelong learning.

Of particular relevance to the population of Gembrook is the desire to be able to downsize to smaller dwellings and properties whilst still remaining within the Gembrook community. There is a distinct lack of housing for older residents within Gembrook so currently many feel they have no choice but to leave the area if they need to downsize. Council will look to support appropriate retirement accommodation within Gembrook which is within walking distance of the town centre.

6.10. People with special needs

Census data showed that in 2006 there was a similar number of people in Gembrook who required assistance with daily activities as in the Shire as a whole. It is important that facilities and services are accessible to people of all abilities. Public transport is limited in Gembrook which restricts the mobility of local residents with respect to accessing regional facilities and services, especially for older people who no longer drive, residents with a disability and residents with no private transport.

To support those who experience access difficulties to the range of Shire owned community facilities within the Gembrook area Council has introduced the Access Priorities Framework which will assist in providing minor facility upgrades. In addition, Council also provides a community capital works grant program to upgrade shire owned assets and community buildings. The community capital works grant program prioritises projects which enhance the accessibility of shire owned facilities.

6.11. Volunteering

According to ABS statistics, 22.3% of residents in Gembrook do volunteer work compared to 19.4% across the Shire as a whole. You don't necessarily have to belong to a group however to be a volunteer in the community. It is apparent in Gembrook that there is also a lot of informal volunteering occurring within the community. For example, many members of the community will offer assistance to people in

times of sickness or bereavement. This is a valued attribute of the community and one that it is hoped will continue long in to the future.

Local volunteers are an invaluable asset in the community. Without volunteers, many of the wonderful activities and initiatives enjoyed by locals and visitors alike would not be possible. There are many volunteer groups in Gembrook, and new volunteers are always welcome and needed.

In conjunction with Chisholm TAFE, Council has developed a marketing and recruitment of volunteers program. The program can be run as a single day 8 hour workshop or can be broken down into smaller sessions and run over a number of days. If there was interest from community groups, council could look at running some sessions in Gembrook.

Cardinia Shire has put together a volunteer database which is accessible on Council's website. The database provides not-for-profit community organisations with an opportunity to recruit volunteers by listing vacancies and options for volunteer positions. The database is a free service to not-for-profit organisations that operate within Cardinia Shire or that service Cardinia Shire residents

The work of volunteers in the community should not be taken for granted. Volunteering in Gembrook needs to be celebrated and encouraged. The opportunities and benefits of being a volunteer need to be promoted. Being a volunteer is a great way to meet new people and make new friends. Volunteering should not just be left to retired and semi-retired community members, people of all ages can volunteer. Gembrook has run an inaugural Volunteers Expo in 2010 to showcase local community groups and volunteerism and there are plans to conduct more in the future.

6.12. Opportunities for community strengthening

Council has established specific Community Strengthening Officers who operate under a place based model to assist with creating and maintaining connections and communication with local organisations and committees. It is hoped that through this establishment of a Community Strengthening Officer specifically for the Ranges Ward that the connection between the Gembrook community and Council can grow.

The Community Strengthening unit also has specific community based portfolios to support community engagement and neighbourhood development. The specific outcomes sought by the neighbourhood development portfolio include helping to ensure that Cardinia Shire community members:

- Have connections to other local people, local groups, local services and governance structures
- Feel supported and encouraged to participate in the community and take on leadership roles

The community would like to see the establishment of a neighbourhood house in Gembrook. Such a facility requires a significant commitment from the community to get off the ground. Generally speaking, neighbourhood houses play a role in community strengthening through providing a number of different services which may include: an informal support network for people who may otherwise be isolated, delivery of children's services including playgroups and child care, training delivery, public internet access, provision of recreation, cultural and social activities, health and wellbeing activities and information and resource centres. Neighbourhood Houses are not-for-profit, incorporated, community organisations managed by volunteers through a committee of management. In order for a neighbourhood house to be established in Gembrook, there would need to be an incorporated, not for profit, volunteer committee of management established before support, grants or funding from Council or DPCD can be obtained. There is also the option for other established groups to auspice a new group and help them apply for funding.

6.13. Key issues

- There is concern that a divide may develop between old and new residents, however there is a strong desire to foster community spirit and encourage new residents to feel welcome and to become involved in the local community.
- Higher than average levels of physical inactivity in children.
- There is a distinct lack of housing for older residents within Gembrook so currently many feel they have no choice but to leave the area if they need to downsize
- Isolation of families from social support services.
- Activities for young people in Gembrook of an evening are fairly limited and those wishing to access evening entertainment facilities are required to travel outside of Gembrook.
- There is a need for more people to volunteer in Gembrook to support the services that are being offered.

6.14. Objectives

- Maintain and enhance community services and facilities.
- Encourage community cohesion and participation in community life.
- Establish housing opportunities within the town centre which allow the community to age in place.

6.15. Policy

- Support development within 400m walking distance of the town centre which meets the needs of retirees within Gembrook.
- Work with the Gembrook community to develop initiatives to foster community spirit.
- Support a neighbourhood committee of management to source seeding funding for a neighbourhood house.
- Promote social support and links to the community through the PlayStart Van and Playgroups in the park. (as per Best Start Action Plan)
- Promote kindergarten participation (as per Best Start Action Plan)
- Offer support to families to access a range of community initiatives including participation in shire wide family days, festivals, parent training programs and in accessing local early years services.

6.16. Actions

- In partnership with the community, prepare a specific “welcome to Gembrook” information sheet for distribution to new residents in the community.
- Host a skate/BMX/scooter event at the Gembrook Skate Park once repairs have been made.
- Seek State Government funding to host an event for young people aged 13 years and over at the Gembrook Community Centre.
- Work with the community to organise a marketing and recruitment of volunteers workshop in Gembrook.
- In partnership with the community, implement a number of neighbourhood development initiatives designed to promote community connection, community leadership and community spirit in Gembrook

7. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

7.1. Overview

Passive and active recreational opportunities are seen by the Gembrook community as a high priority as they provide local residents with the opportunity to participate in a variety of different recreational, sporting and cultural activities and help to create social cohesion and wellbeing. Some of the recreational activities that are currently enjoyed in Gembrook are: Skateboarding, football, cricket, netball, bowling, bike riding, horse riding and yoga. There is a community desire to increase the number of recreation facilities in Gembrook. Some of the facilities suggested by the community were: 2 more netball courts, a dirt BMX track, a fitness equipment station, and increased recreational trails.

7.2. Recreation facilities

Table 4: Open Space in Gembrook 2011

Open Space	Role	Ownership	Management
Gembrook Park	Passive open space, conservation, historical significance.	Crown land	Council, friends of Gembrook Park
Gembrook Sports Ground	Active open space.	Council	Section 86 Committee of Management
Gembrook Leisure Park	Passive open space.	Council	Council
Bunyip State Park	Passive open space, conservation	Crown Land	Parks Victoria, friends of Bunyip State Park
Kurth Kiln Regional Park	Passive open space, conservation, historical significance.	Crown Land	Parks Victoria, friends of Kurth Kiln
JAC Russel Park	Town Park, passive open space.	Emerald Tourist Railway Board	Council
Gilwell Park	Scout camp, organised recreation.	Scout Association of Australia – Victorian Branch	Caretakers
Redwood Road Reserve	Passive open space	Council	Council
Remembrance Park	Passive open space, remembrance, location for ANZAC Day service	Crown Land	Council
Red Road Reserve	Conservation	Crown Land	Parks Victoria

Active open space can be defined as land set aside for the specific purpose of formal organised/club based sports. Passive open space refers to open space that is set aside for parks, gardens, linear corridors, conservation bushlands, nature reserves, public squares and community gardens that are made available for passive recreation, play and unstructured physical activity including walking, cycling, hiking, revitalisation, contemplation and enjoying nature.

Gembrook Park, Bunyip State Park and Kurth Kiln Regional Park are the key passive open spaces which service the Gembrook township. These are environmentally significant areas and are of great value to the community. There is a need for efficient management of these assets to balance conservation needs, recreational activities and fire risk. According to Parks Victoria, the Bunyip State Park area has a long history of timber cutting. The Mortimer Mill which was constructed in 1898, located at the present site of Mortimer Picnic Ground, is thought to be the oldest timber mill in the Park.

Kurth Kiln Regional Park is most commonly known for its historical kiln which was used during the Second World War to make charcoal for gas producer units fitted to motor cars as a substitute for petrol

which was rationed at the time. Kurth Kiln is a rare example of a reasonably intact charcoal burning kiln and the only one of its type in Australia.

Both Kurth Kiln Regional Park and Bunyip State Park also provide bush camping opportunities. There are no bookings required or fees for camping at Bunyip State Park or Kurth Kiln Regional Park. The camping areas operate on a first-in first-served basis all year round.

Within the township of Gembrook is Gembrook Park. The park is about 29 hectares but was originally part of a 259-hectare reserve founded by the former Zoological and Acclimatisation Society in 1873. In 1906, the land was temporarily reserved after numerous petitions from local residents and was gazetted as a permanent reserve two years later. Gembrook Park is managed by Council with the assistance of the “friends of Gembrook Park” group. Volunteer groups like “friends of Gembrook Park” play an important role in providing support to council in regular maintenance activities.

The main active open space area that services the township is the Gembrook Sports Ground. The Gembrook Sports Ground is home to “The Brookers” (the Gembrook Cockatoo Football Netball club), the Gembrook cricket club and the Gembrook – Cockatoo junior cricket club. In addition to netball, football and cricket facilities, the Gembrook Sports Ground also includes tennis courts (line marked within the netball courts), cricket nets and club rooms. Unfortunately the Gembrook netball club is unable to play their home games in Gembrook, rather they have to travel to Belgrave South, as the Gembrook Sports Ground only has two netball courts and the minimum number of courts required for competitions is four. The installation of two more netball courts would allow the potential for competition games to be played at the Gembrook Sports Ground.

The Gembrook Leisure Park is adjacent to the Gembrook Community Centre and includes a large concrete skate park, a playground, public toilets, barbeques, and picnic facilities. It has been brought to Council’s attention that this playground is in need of a new coat of paint and some small repairs are required at the skate park. There is also a need to provide more direct access between the Leisure Park and the Community Centre. Currently users are scaling the embankment between the Leisure Park and the Community Centre rather than taking the path around. A revitalisation of Gembrook Leisure Park will form an action of this strategy. The Gembrook Community Centre is home to the Gembrook Bowlers and Gembrook Singers who meet there weekly. Gembrook residents also have access to basketball and indoor soccer courts at the near by Mountain Road reserve in Cockatoo.

The Gembrook Skate Park is seen as a popular attraction for young people in the area. A request was made for there to be skate competitions held at the Gembrook Skate Park in the future. This would be subject to interest from local skaters and Council funding, but may be a possibility in the future. Some concern was raised by the community regarding safety at the skate park. Council will regularly monitor the skate park for physical damage and graffiti and work to rectify any dangers promptly. The need for lighting at the skate park was also raised and as such has been identified in Section 8.2 of the Strategy as a priority location.

Within the Main street of Gembrook is also J.A.C Russel Park which includes a small park, Barbeque and picnic facilities, a rotunda and some display boards which provide information on the history of Gembrook. This park is in need of some renovations. The playground in JAC Russel Park needs replacing, as do the seats, and the surrounding and entry fencing needs repainting. There is also a strong desire in the community to see a public toilet installed in JAC Russel Park. A revitalisation of JAC Russel Park will form an action of this strategy. The JAC Russel Park land is not actually owned by Council, rather it is owned by Puffing Billy. Council recognises the importance of this park to the community and will seek to secure the long term use of JAC Russel Park for open space purposes.

Another open space within Gembrook is Gilwell Park. Gilwell Park is a 157 hectare camping property owned by the Scout Association of Australia (Victorian Branch). Although the camp is mainly used by scouting groups, the opportunity exists for anyone to take advantage of the accommodation and on site activities available. Gilwell Park operators also intend to expand their facilities in the future to provide some caravan camping sites on site.

Horse riding is another popular recreational activity for Gembrook residents. Gembrook is home to the Gembrook Riding Club, situated on the corner of Red Road and Gembrook Road.

7.3. Paths and trails

Council has completed the Emerald to Cockatoo section of the Emerald to Gembrook regional trail. There is strong community desire to see the remaining section from Cockatoo to Gembrook completed. It is important that both Council and the community continue to advocate for the delivery of this trail as additional funding is required to complete it. The next step is for Council and Parks Victoria to finalise the route the trail will take and to prepare detailed plans for funding considerations.

The potential exists to provide a path between the Puffing Billy Railway Station and the Gembrook Sports Ground along the Puffing Billy Railway line. This would better connect the town to the recreation reserve and give people the option of a safe and active way to travel without needing to go by car. In a time when obesity is becoming more and more of a problem, it is important that active transport (walking, cycling, skating, etc) is promoted and provided for. This path could become a section of the Emerald to Gembrook trail in the future.

There is a clear need to provide better access to the picnic tables in Gembrook Park. Currently the picnic tables are difficult to locate. Access to the picnic area is impeded by overgrown vegetation and is not appropriate for people of all abilities to use. There is also no signage to alert visitors to these facilities. As an action of this strategy a path will be constructed and directional signage provided from the car park around to the western end of the picnic area and from the picnic area to the toilet facilities.

Other desired future trail locations include:

- A path connecting the town with Gilwell Park Scout Camp and Kurth Kiln Regional Park down Launching Place Road.
- A town loop which connects JAC Russel Park, Main Street, Gembrook Leisure Park and Gembrook Park.

In planning the exact location for the proposed paths and trails it is vital that the location of remnant vegetation be taken into consideration and that impact on this vegetation be avoided. There is also a desire to see additional signage and facilities provided for pedestrians and cyclists, including directional and tourist signage, seats, bike racks, rubbish bins and drinking fountains.

7.4. Opportunities for open space and Recreation

A desire has been expressed in the community for a fitness equipment station to be positioned in one of the open space locations. Such facilities would encourage people to incorporate additional exercises into their walk or run. The inclusion of fitness equipment could be requested as part of the community consultation for the replacement of the playground in JAC Russel Park.

Feedback from the Gembrook community has shown that there is an expressed interest in planting fruit trees in parks/open spaces. The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2009-2013 identified similar public interest in planting fruit trees and has allocated an action to “explore the opportunity to plant fruit trees in community spaces” in the Plan. This action may support a pilot initiative in a township such as Gembrook with community support. This action contributes to opportunities to find local solutions to food security issues within the Shire.

The recent renovations in the Gembrook Community Centre mean that its capabilities have now greatly increased. Community members have suggested that it would be wonderful to have performances at the Community Centre by organisations such as Gemco and other local artists. There is a distinct lack of evening entertainment in the Hills region for young people. Cardinia Shire Council Youth Services have committed to exploring the possibility of hosting a FReeZA event at the Gembrook Community Centre by December 2012. This facility may also be used by Council Youth Services for an interest based program in 2011.

The community would like to see more resources being put into paths, playgrounds and passive recreation not just active recreation facilities. Provision of activities for residents aged 40+ were considered to be particularly lacking. There is a need in Gembrook for more recreation activities for older persons, which is a growing demographic in the area. It was raised that meeting this need could be a goal for the Community Centre.

Concern was raised over the need these days to become an incorporated body before a new group can be formed, which makes starting up very difficult. If something is a formalised activity, there is membership involved or money changing hands then this triggers the requirement to become an incorporated body. One such idea was a walking group. This would not be a money making venture, simply a way for people to get motivated to become more active. Sometimes it is possible to apply through an agency rather than having to become an incorporated body, in the case of a proposed walking group, this could include Dietbetes Victoria or the national Heart Foundation. The community would like to see a neighbourhood house established in Gembrook which could support such activities. In the mean time, community members interested in starting up a new group should speak to Council's Recreation Development Officer who can provide guidance.

7.5. Key issues

- There is a need for management of open space areas to balance conservation needs, recreational activities and fire risk.
- Gembrook Sports Ground requires a minimum of four netball courts before competitions can be played there.
- The Gembrook Leisure Park needs to be regularly maintained.
- The completion of the Emerald to Gembrook trail is a high priority for the community.
- The Gembrook Sports Ground is disconnected from the town centre and is difficult to access by any other means than vehicle transport.
- There is a distinct lack of evening entertainment in the Hills region for young people.
- There is a need in Gembrook for more recreation activities for older persons, which is a growing demographic in the area
- Starting up a new recreational group is difficult due to the requirement to become an incorporated body.

7.6. Objectives

- Make Gembrook a walkable town, better connecting the town to open space and encouraging recreation and active transport opportunities
- Encourage community cohesion and participation in community life.
- Provide and maintain open spaces to meet the active and passive recreational needs of the community across a wide range of user groups.

7.7. Policy

- Balance the recreational, environmental and wildfire management objectives of open space reserves.
- Improve pedestrian accessibility and safety in Gembrook through the upgrading and extension of the footpath and trail network. Give priority to the locations identified in the Gembrook Township Strategy when installing new footpaths and trails.
- Develop and maintain a network of paths and trails

- Assist those wishing to start up a new recreational group with the process of formalising the group.

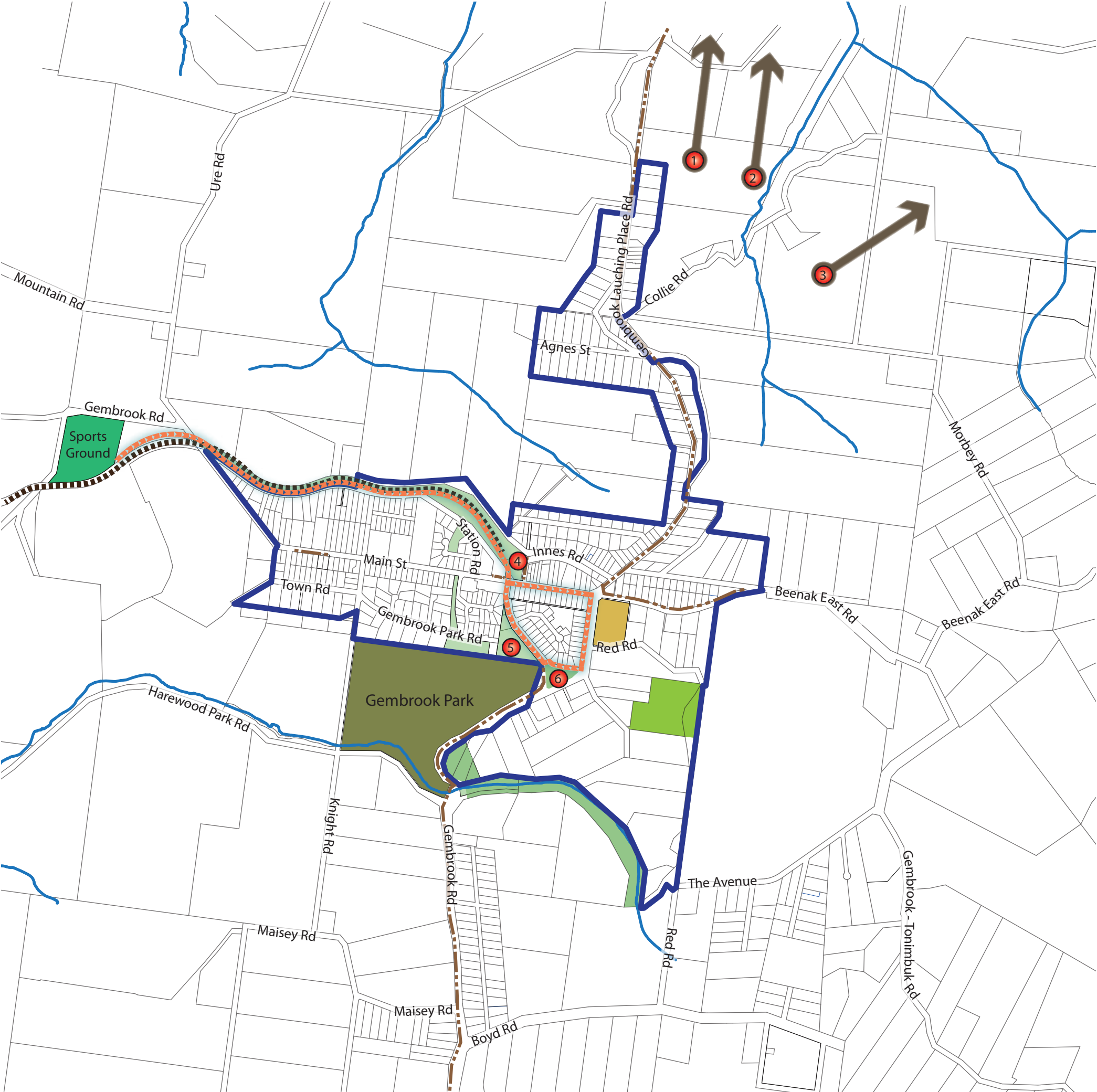
7.8. Actions

- Install two additional netball courts at the Gembrook Sports Ground
- Revitalise and provide for the ongoing maintenance of Gembrook Leisure Park
- Host a skate/BMX/scooter event at the Gembrook Skate Park
- Revitalise and provide for the ongoing maintenance of JAC Russel Park, including replacing the playground.
- Secure the long term use of JAC Russel Park for open space purposes.
- Finalise the route the Emerald to Gembrook Regional Trail will take and prepare detailed plans for funding considerations
- Complete the Emerald to Gembrook Regional Trail.
- Provide a walking/bike path along the Puffing Billy route connecting the town centre to the Gembrook Sports Ground
- Construct a path and provide directional signage from the car park around to the western end of the picnic area and from the picnic area to the toilet facilities in Gembrook Park.
- Investigate the need and opportunity to provide a path from town to Gilwell Park and Kurth Kiln Regional Park along Gembrook-Launching Place Road.
- Provide a path which connects JAC Russel Park, Main Street, Gembrook Leisure Park and Gembrook Park.
- Seek State Government funding to host an event for young people aged 13 years and over at the Gembrook Community Centre.
- Develop and implement an interest based program (over a school term) for young people in Gembrook.

Figure 15

Open Space & Linkages

Gembrook Township Strategy



1:15000 @ A3



Puffing Billy



Waterway



Urban Growth Boundary



Footpaths - potential



Pedestrian Trail - Proposed



Gembrook Park



Reserve



Gembrook Leisure Park



Gembrook Sports Ground



Red Rd Conservation Reserve



Kurth Kiln - 230m



Gilwell Park - 1780m



Bunyip State Park - 650m



JAC Russell Park



Redwood Reserve



Remembrance Park



8. TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

8.1. Overview

A high proportion of Gembrook residents are dependant on motor vehicles for transport due to the rural nature of the township and limited public transport services available. This reliance in turn means that the Gembrook community is more exposed to the effects of increasing fuel prices. Analysis of the method of travel to work for the residents in Gembrook in 2006 showed that 2.9% used public transport and 2.1% walked, while 64% used a car as a driver and 4.4% used a car as a passenger. Although still very low, the percentage of people using public transport to get to work increased by 1.4% between 2001 and 2006. In 2006 there were also 8.8% of residents who worked from home, which is higher than the Shire as a whole which reported only 6.6%.

In addition to identifying opportunities to address traffic and public transport issues, this chapter also identifies actions to improve the pedestrian and bicycle connectivity within the area.

8.2. Road network

Arterial Road network

VicRoads is responsible for the operation and management of the arterial road network. The arterial road network within the Gembrook District comprises the Belgrave-Gembrook Road, Gembrook-Pakenham Road and Gembrook-launching Place Road. Gembrook-Pakenham Road provides the most direct access to Pakenham town centre. Subsequently this also provides access to the Princes Highway and Freeway and Melbourne's inner suburbs. Belgrave-Gembrook Road connects Gembrook with the hills townships of Cockatoo, Emerald and Belgrave and subsequently to Wellington Road and the Burwood Highway.

Given the increasing dominance of Pakenham as a regional centre it could be anticipated that the use of the Gembrook-Pakenham Road for both commuters to Pakenham and tourist traffic from Pakenham is likely to increase fairly significantly into the future.

Feedback from the community raised concerns over the need for overtaking lanes and passing bays on the major arterial roads. To provide these may prove difficult given the topography and local environment. Council will need to liaise with Vic Roads to determine what measures can be taken. A further safety concern that was raised is the need for motor cycle friendly barriers on sharp corners as well as more warning signage when approaching corners on the major arterial roads in the area. Concern was also raised regarding the condition of the arterial roads, particularly Gembrook Road. The drainage in particular requires attention as there is often water pooling on the road. The corners of Mt Eirene Road, Bessie Creek Road and Gould Road where they each intersect with Gembrook Road are very dangerous due to ripples in the road surface and water pooling on the road.

Additional concerns have been raised over the intersection of Main Street, Gembrook Road, Gembrook-Launching Place Road and Beenak East Road and the need for the installation of a roundabout. Council has commissioned initial investigations of this intersection and it has been determined that traffic turning movements would be conducive to a roundabout treatment. A preliminary design can be found in Appendix D. Council recognises that the installation of a roundabout at this intersection is a high priority for the community but as this intersection is between arterial roads it is controlled by VicRoads not Council. VicRoads support and funding will be required before such a treatment can be implemented. Council recognises that due to the low casualty numbers at this intersection, installation of a roundabout is not likely to be a high priority for VicRoads when considered against their policies. Any future roundabout installation should also be mindful of pedestrian movements at this intersection not just vehicles.

A further road safety issue raised involved blind corners at intersections adjoining Main Street, where large trees are obstructing view lines for drivers. A potential option for addressing this issue is to narrow Main Street and bring the intersections beyond the trees to provide clear site lines. Reducing the speed limit along Main Street would also improve the safety by providing more time for road users to react in the

event of someone failing to give way. This is a matter which will need to be pursued further with VicRoads.

Feedback was also received from the community regarding the need for directional signage from Pakenham to Gembrook. There is existing signage from the Princes Highway in Pakenham directing people to Gembrook. Vic Roads guidelines require that only the city or town that is directly accessed via the exit ramp be named on any directional signage from the Freeway (Bypass).

Local Roads

Significant local roads within Gembrook include Station Street, Redwood Road, Innes Rd, Ure Rd, Mountain Rd and Beenak East Rd. The inherent nature of roads in the broader Gembrook District was a common concern raised during consultation. Council will continue to progressively undertake and implement special charge schemes to seal roads identified as a priority. This will be informed and influenced by a consultative process to seek input from the local community into the design and implementation of infrastructure works. One such road that was specifically mentioned was Innes Road, as this road is currently being used as a Main Street bypass, creating additional disturbance and dust. However, experience has shown that when unsealed roads are sealed, traffic volumes and speeds tend to increase.

Concern was also raised over vehicle speed in local streets. Where particular sites are identified, Council will investigate each request and assess the appropriateness of using traffic calming devices. Council recently sealed the intersection of Orchard Road and Belgrave – Gembrook Road which had been previously identified by the community as an issue. Council intend to seal the rest of Orchard Road up to the entry of the recreation reserve in the future.

There was a suggestion raised by the community that the laneway behind Main Street should be constructed and made to be one way only. This suggestion certainly has merit and would be beneficial to both those using the laneway and the surrounding residents who are affected by the noise of reversing trucks as they exit the laneway. The construction of the laneway would need to be done as part of a special charge scheme requested by adjacent property owners. As part of this process, due consideration would be given to whether the laneway would function best as one way.

Street Lighting

Community members have expressed a desire for additional street lighting in Gembrook. Adequate street lighting is very important for community safety and as such will be reviewed and an annual street lighting program implemented. The following is a list of priority locations community members have identified for additional street lighting:

- Additional lighting in Main Street (town centre).
- Station Street, closer to Main Street.
- Main Street between the west end of Station Rd and Bromby Street.
- Station Rd, especially the eastern end of Station Rd between Anzac St and Main Street.
- Puffing Billy yard.
- Intersection of Gembrook Rd and Mt Eirene Rd.
- Innes Rd
- Launching Place Rd
- The skate park

8.3. Traffic

Many residents have commented that the speed through Main Street needs to be reduced to 50km/h. The speed limit of Main Street is controlled by VicRoads. Although Main Street is a declared arterial road, its function as a main street also needs to be given due consideration. Council and the community can advocate to VicRoads for a reduction in the speed limit.

Council commissioned *O'Brien Traffic* to set up automatic tube counts from 13 to 19 October 2010 in the Main Street outside the Post Office and outside the Ranges Hotel. A summary of the findings is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Main Street Traffic Count Results, October 2010

Location	Average Weekday Volume	AM Peak / PM Peak	Percentage Commercial vehicles	85 th Percentile Speed
Outside Post Office	2,599 vpd	8-9am – 207 veh 3-4pm – 261 veh	9 %	52.3km/h
Outside The Ranges Hotel	2,957 vpd	8-9am – 259 veh 3-4pm – 302 veh	8%	57.5 km/h

Traffic counts have been conducted in Main Street between Gembrook Rd and Redwood Road in the past and the 24 hour vehicle counts were as follows:

June 1978 – 1198 vpd
 March 1982 – 1861 vpd
 June 1990 – 2068 vpd
 May 1994 – 2011 vpd
 February 1996 – 2123 vpd

Comparing the past vehicle counts to those undertaken in 2010, it can be seen that there has been about a 20% increase in vehicle volumes through Main Street per day since 1996. This would be likely to increase further again in the future if Puffing Billy services began departing from Gembrook. In saying this however these volumes are still very low for a primary arterial road and are more akin to a low volume collector road.

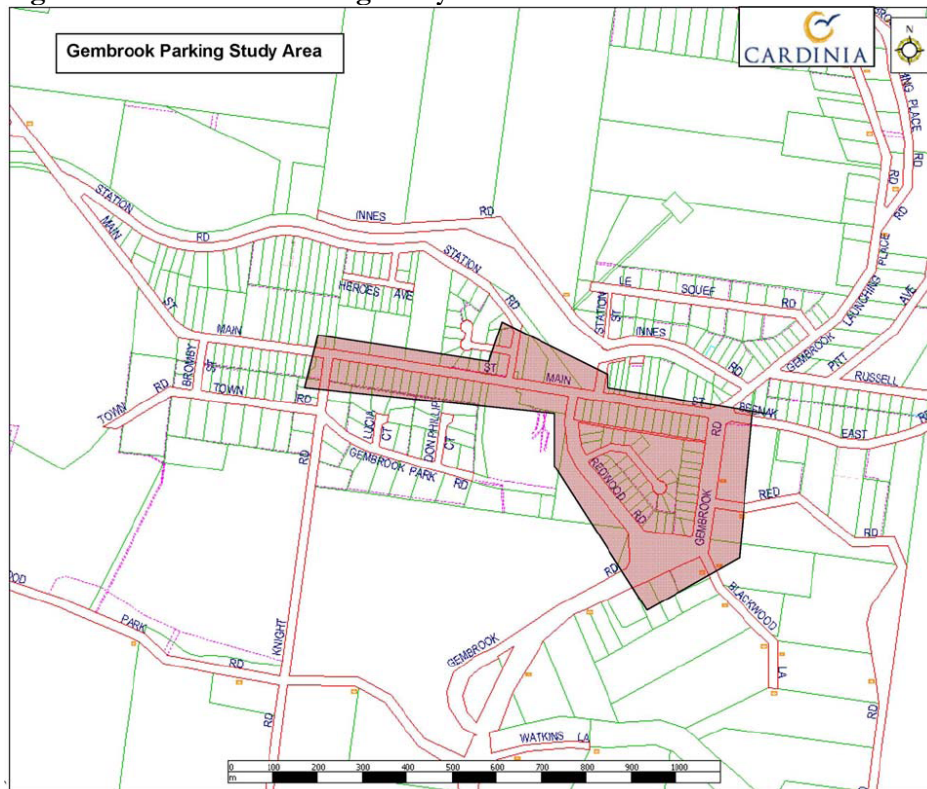
8.4. Parking

The provision of adequate car parking in Gembrook was raised as a concern by community members during the consultation period for this strategy. As a result, Council engaged *Obrien Traffic* to undertake a parking study of the Gembrook town centre. The objectives of their study were to:

- Determine the number and type of parking spaces currently available;
- Understand the current usage/occupancy rates;
- Discuss the future needs for car parking requirements within the township.

The extent of the study area is shown in figure 16.

Figure 16: Gembrook Parking Study area



Source: O'Brian Traffic, 2009

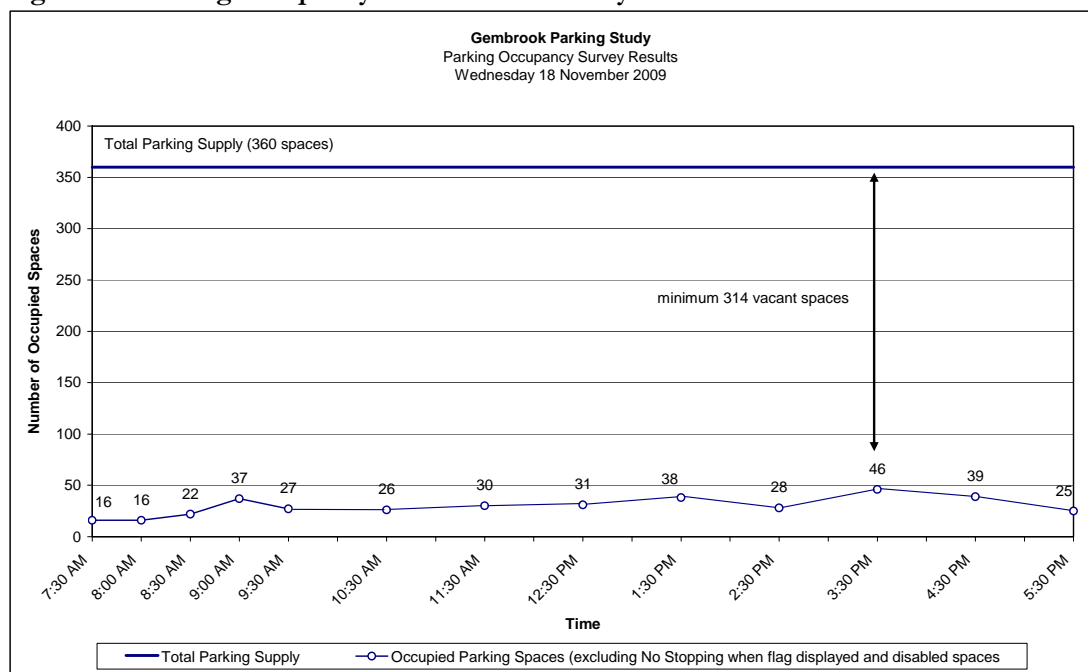
The study area comprised approximately 360 public car spaces, 276 on street spaces and 84 off street spaces. For the most part, car parking is not linemarked within the study area. Therefore it was necessary to estimate the number of car spaces available based on car parking standards for length and width. The on-street spaces are not subject to any parking restrictions.

Obrien traffic commissioned surveys of the utilisation of public parking within the study area on:

- Wednesday 18 November 2009 from 7:30am – 5:30pm; and
- Sunday 22 November 2009 from 7:30am – 5:00pm

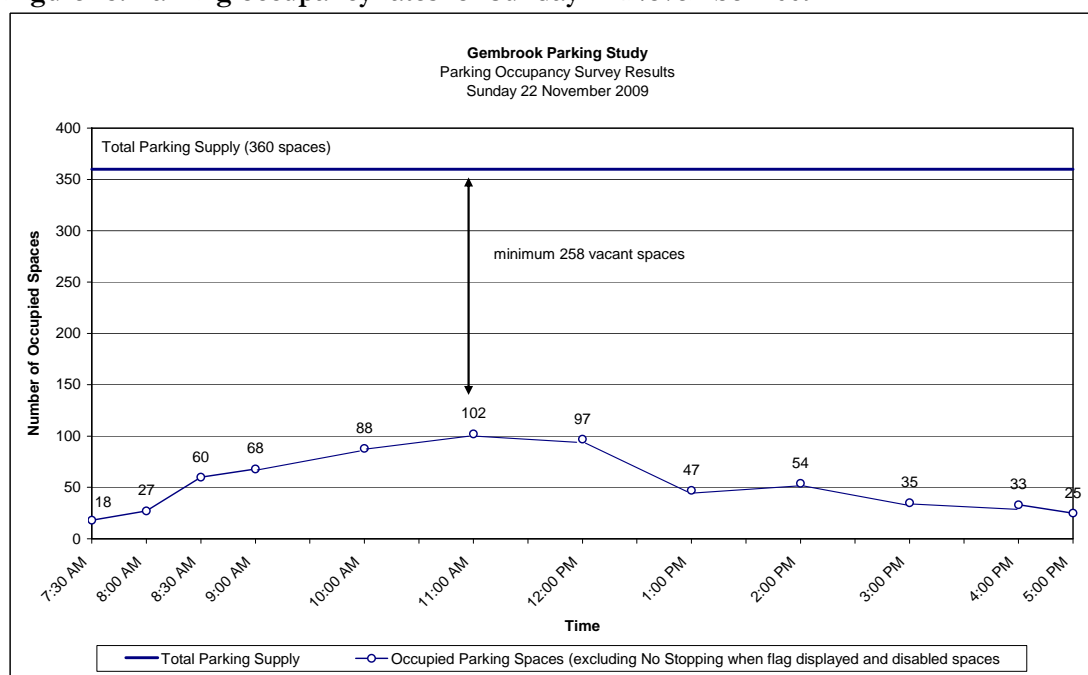
Sunday 22 November was chosen as a survey day as this was a day when the Gembrook market was being held. The rate of occupancy can be seen in Figures 17 and 18.

Figure 17: Parking occupancy rates for Wednesday 18 November 2009



Source: O'Brien Traffic 2009

Figure 18: Parking occupancy rates for Sunday 22 November 2009



Source: O'Brien Traffic 2009

The results of the parking surveys indicate that there is an abundance of car parking available in Gembrook which is more than adequate to cater for its current and likely future needs within the timeframe of this strategy. If, in the future, additional parking is required, consideration should be given to use of the Council depot site on Redwood Road. In order to make better use of existing car parking spaces, car parks in Main Street and Station Street should be linemarked.

There is concern regarding the need to seal or erect bollards in the Community Centre car park to deter hoon activity in the car park. Bollards will probably be the most effective at achieving this.

8.5. Public transport

Gembrook is serviced by two public bus routes. The 695 route which runs between Belgrave and Gembrook and the 840 route which runs between Gembrook and Pakenham. The 695 route begins or ends at the Belgrave Station which links to the metropolitan train system. This service also stops at Avonsleigh, Emerald, Clematis, Menzies Creek and Selby. The service operates at approximately half hour intervals between 5:30am and 5:45pm Monday to Friday and about 50 minute intervals until 9:00pm. On weekends the service operates at between 45 minute and 1 hour intervals.

On Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays there is a service between Gembrook and Fountain Gate Shopping Centre via Cockatoo and Emerald (Route 695F). On Tuesday there is a special service with an extension to the Dandenong market.

The community is very pleased to have the 695 bus service, especially since the weekday frequency has been increased to every half an hour. Community members have reported a noticeable reduction in hitch hiking in the area as a result and a number of retired locals have taken advantage of the bus services to access medical appointments.

At the time of conducting the community consultation for the preparation of the draft Gembrook Township Strategy there was an overwhelming community desire for a bus service between Gembrook and Pakenham. Many residents expressed this as a top priority as it would provide better access for residents to facilities and services, particularly medical, in Pakenham. It was also suggested that a bus service between Pakenham and Gembrook may increase the tourism potential for Gembrook. This desire has since been fulfilled with the State Government commencing the route 840 Gembrook - Pakenham bus service on 29 March 2010 as an 18 month trial. The service operates from Gembrook Main Street through Pakenham Upper, stopping at Pakenham railway station and then terminating within the Pakenham shopping centre. The service is fairly limited with only four services from Gembrook and five from Pakenham per day from Monday-Friday and only three services each way on Saturdays. There is currently no service on Sundays. Unfortunately the number of people using the service is not high, except for in school holidays. If numbers do not increase, this service may not continue beyond the 18 month trial period.

Public transport needs to be made a viable transport option and not a last resort for community members. Other bus services that were requested were: a service to Kurth Kiln, a service to Berwick, a service past Gilwell Park scout camp, and a service to Launching Place. In addition to this, it was suggested that there is a need for increased awareness in the community of the existing public transport services.

8.6. Pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian network

Currently there is an ad hoc footpath system throughout the town, with several key links missing. There is currently no official bicycle network or shared paths in Gembrook. Gembrook Park provides a number of unsealed walking paths. The provision and maintenance of footpaths was raised as an area of concern during consultation with the Gembrook community. Physical inactivity is considered to be a problem in Gembrook. All weather connections need to be provided where there are missing links between the existing sealed path network. It is also important that adequate seating be provided along existing and new footpaths.

Pedestrian accessibility is an issue particularly for older people, people with mobility issues and parents with prams. The initial section of the footpath that runs up from Le Soeuf Rd to Innes Rd is very steep and the need to install a hand rail has been identified. A need exists to provide a point for pedestrians to cross across Gembrook-Pakenham Road to link Gembrook Park and the Gembrook Community Centre. There is also a need to provide an all abilities access path to the picnic area within Gembrook Park. A need was also identified to provide a pram crossing on either side of Main Street on the west side of the intersection with Gembrook-Launching Place Rd, Gembrook-Pakenham Rd and Beenak East Rd.

Although there is a desire to see the footpaths extend north, south, east and west from the town centre to provide a comprehensive path network, particular priorities that were raised with regards to footpaths and walking trails were:

- Completion of the Emerald to Gembrook recreational trail.

- A walking/bike path along the Puffing Billy route connecting the town centre to the Gembrook Sports Ground.
- Gembrook-Pakenham Rd between Mt Eirene Rd and Main Street (staged).
- Station Street between Main Street and the existing path that runs up from Le Souef Road.
- A town loop which connects JAC Russel Park, Main Street, Gembrook Leisure Park and Gembrook Park.
- East side of Gembrook-Launching Place Rd between Russel Rd and Beenak East Rd
- Southern side of Main Rd, between Bromby Street and the Gembrook Kindergarten. It is currently a pebble path.
- A section of footpath is missing near where the mobile library parks.
- A path from town to Gilwell Park along Gembrook-Launching Place Road.
- From Main Street down Beenak East Rd to Russel Road (staged).
- From the end of Banks-Smith Drive connecting to Redwood Road and Gembrook Park.

Council has completed the Emerald to Cockatoo section of the Emerald to Gembrook regional trail. There is strong community desire to see the remaining section from Cockatoo to Gembrook completed. It is important that both Council and the community continue to advocate for the delivery of this trail as additional funding is required to complete it. The next step is for Council and Parks Victoria to finalise the route the trail will take and to prepare detailed plans for funding considerations.

The potential exists to provide a path between the Puffing Billy railway Station and the Gembrook Sports Ground along the Puffing Billy Railway line. This would better connect the town to the recreation reserve and give people the option of a safe and active way to travel without needing to go by car. In a time when obesity is becoming more and more of a problem, it is important that active transport (walking, cycling, skating, etc) is promoted and provided for. This path could become a section of the Emerald to Gembrook trail in the future.

There is also a desire to see additional signage and facilities provided for pedestrians and cyclists, including directional and tourist signage, seats, bike racks, rubbish bins and drinking fountains.

8.7. Traffic and transport opportunities

Although at the moment there is an abundance of parking available in Gembrook, if, in the future, additional parking is required, consideration should be given to use of the Council depot site on Redwood Road.

There needs to be a balance between the different modes of movement throughout Main Street which recognises that this is a town centre environment. At the moment, priority is skewed to one mode of movement, through vehicle transport. There is an opportunity to provide appropriately for all modes of movement including pedestrians, cyclists and local traffic.

There is a very clear pedestrian preference to cross Main Street out the front of the Gembrook Post Office. Council commissioned a pedestrian count to be undertaken at two points on Main Street on an average weekday, 21 October 2010. The results of this survey are shown in Appendix E. Pedestrian volumes outside the post office peaked at 120 movements per hour. This location has therefore been chosen as a priority location for the installation of a pedestrian crossing with flashing lights.

As described in Chapter 5 of this strategy, there is a need to undertake some streetscape works in Main Street to revitalise the town centre. The aim of the revitalisation project would be to establish an attractive, low speed, pedestrian friendly environment over the length of the town centre. The key changes from a traffic and transport point of view would be:

- Provision of a pedestrian crossing with flashing lights

- line marking parking spaces
- Providing tree outstands
- Reducing the speed limit

8.8. Key issues

- Several safety concerns have been raised regarding the main arterial roads in the area
- Vehicle speeds in local streets
- The posted speed limit in Main Street is considered inappropriate for a town centre environment
- Reliance on motor vehicle transport
- Need for increased public transport services
- Physical inactivity and the need to better provide for pedestrian movement throughout the town
- Safely accommodating pedestrian movements across Main Street
- Hoon driving in Community Centre car park

8.9. Objectives

- Establish an attractive, low speed, pedestrian friendly environment throughout the town centre.
- Maintain, improve and increase use of public transport services and facilities.
- Make Gembrook a walkable town, better connecting the town to open space and encouraging recreation and active transport opportunities

8.10. Policy

- Provide a safe, functional and well maintained local road network.
- Advocate for a safe, functional and well maintained declared arterial road network.
- Progressively upgrade local roads to a sealed standard through the implementation of Special Charge Schemes in accordance with Council's Special Charge Scheme Program.
- Improve street lighting throughout Gembrook. Give priority to the locations identified in the Gembrook Township Strategy when installing new street lights
- Advocate to VicRoads for measures to be taken to improve the pedestrian environment in Main Street
- Advocate to VicRoads for a reduction in the speed limit through Main Street to 50km/h.
- Improve pedestrian accessibility and safety in Gembrook through the upgrading and extension of the footpath and trail network. Give priority to the locations identified in the Gembrook Township Strategy when installing new footpaths and trails.
- Provide seating along established and new footpaths to encourage people to walk into and around town.

8.11. Actions

- Finalise the proposed route for the Emerald to Gembrook Regional Trail and prepare detailed plans for funding considerations
- Complete the Emerald to Gembrook Regional Trail.

- Provide a walking/bike path along the Puffing Billy route connecting the town centre to the Gembrook Sports Ground
- Commence delivery of the priority footpaths as identified in the Gembrook Township Strategy.
- Investigate the need and opportunity to provide a path from town to Gilwell Park along Gembrook-Launching Place Road.
- Seal Orchard Road up to the main gate of the Gembrook Sports Ground.
- Install bollards in the Gembrook Community Centre car park.
- Install a pram crossing and a connecting path across the nature strip opposite the exit to the Gembrook Community Centre.
- Install a pram crossing on either side of Main Street on the west side of the intersection with Gembrook-Launching Place Rd, Gembrook-Pakenham Rd and Beenak East Rd
- Advocate to VicRoads to construct a roundabout at the intersection of Main Street, Gembrook Road and Gembrook-Launching Place Road and Beenak East Road
- Install a hand rail at the northern end of the footpath that runs between Le Souef Rd and Innes Rd

9. PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

9.1. Overview

The availability of physical infrastructure services to the Gembrook township is limited, with many services only available in the core of the town. This chapter provides an overview of the available physical infrastructure including: sewerage, drainage, gas, electricity, water and telecommunications.

9.2. Sewerage

The sewerage network is managed by Yarra Valley Water. Gembrook is serviced by a pressurised sewer system. This means each property requires an on-property pumping unit to connect to the sewerage system. To date approximately 100 properties around the centre of Gembrook have been connected to the sewerage network.

Gembrook was first serviced by reticulated sewerage in 2007, when Yarra Valley Water provided a new system funded through the Sewerage Backlog Program. This system involves transferring sewage from Gembrook to the system in Cockatoo via a transfer main.

Other parts of Gembrook are also scheduled to receive sewerage service through the Sewerage Backlog Program. Four remaining areas of Gembrook comprising approximately 200 properties are scheduled to receive sewerage services between 2019/20 and 2024/25. The schedule to deliver sewerage services is determined by a combination of factors including environmental and public health information provided by all councils with backlog areas. This schedule is subject to change depending on updated information becoming available. Yarra Valley Water intends to service all backlog areas by the end of 2025. Appendix B shows both the existing and proposed areas to be serviced by sewer under the Sewerage Backlog Program in Gembrook.

Connecting to the sewerage network helps reduce the impact of existing septic systems on the environment. Properties not able to connect to the sewerage network are required to maintain appropriate on-site wastewater treatment and disposal systems. Council acts as the licensing authority for domestic septic tank systems and subsequently approve the installation and supervise the performance of septic tank systems. All new developments in Gembrook (in and outside of the sewerage backlog areas) will be required to connect to sewer unless they have the capability to manage their domestic wastewater onsite.

9.3. Drainage

Underground drainage is only provided within the town centre of Gembrook and even then it is mostly in the new estates where it has been required as a condition of the subdivision. Water flowing from townships, through drainage lines and into the creek system is typically of poor quality. This is because overland water flow collects nutrients and sediments from urban development, roads and leaking septic tanks. The resultant nutrient and sediment rich water presents a noticeable detrimental impact along the gully lines in Gembrook Park. Residents and visitors to Gembrook need to be more litter conscious as a considerable amount of litter is transported via drains into Gembrook Park.

Gembrook residents have in the past raised concerns regarding erosion and siltation associated with storm water runoff into Gembrook Park. In an effort to mitigate this problem, Council required the installation of a retarding basin above Gembrook Park to slow the release of water into the Park. This basin captures stormwater runoff generally from the subdivided area south of Main Street and between Knight Road and Vista Court that lies north of Gembrook Park and discharges it to the gully south of Banks-Smith Drive. The basin has had some impact on managing the erosion damage along the gully below the retarding basin but the problem has not yet been entirely resolved and further measures need to be taken. An 'erosion head' in the same gully system is also slowly eroding up the gully. Council identified and trialled some temporary works involving coco peat and hay bale erosion control devices, however this has been largely unsuccessful in managing the high discharge rates which are continuing to erode the gully.

In an effort to further manage the volume of water running from the township and into Gembrook Park from the area east of Vista Court and west of Gembrook Road, drainage lines have been diverted via a swale from Redwood Road and down past the toilet block in the park. The impact of this drainage line

on the vegetation and physical features of the park needs to be monitored. Concern has also been raised over drainage problems at the front door of the Community Centre.

Experience to date has demonstrated that interim temporary treatments to attempt to manage the erosion and siltation issues associated with the retarding basin discharges are unlikely to be successful. They may assist in managing flows from minor storm events, however they are generally incapable of managing flows that bring the retarding basin into operation.

Management of the serious erosion and siltation issues within the Park and downstream of the retarding basin and toilet block swale require urgent detailed engineering investigation remedial works if they are to be managed effectively. Temporary works and interim measures are unlikely to slow the rates of erosion.

The impact of outfall water flows directly impact on the water quality of these natural waterways. This includes run off from private properties and leakage from septic systems into storm water drainage lines.

Throughout the township a more integrated approach must be implemented for storm water management. On a local scale, this will involve the promotion of water sensitive urban design opportunities with particular emphasis toward on-site water retention to reduce peak discharges and to also improve water quality. On a broader scale the impact of water runoff on the entire catchment must be considered. This must involve the development a drainage strategy for the entire catchment so that resources are allocated to manage storm water at the top of the catchment to ensure there are no downstream impacts. Resources may be required to be allocated across the broader creek system. Developments that are proposed in Gembrook must have regard to this strategy.

9.4. Water supply

Reticulated water is provided to the Gembrook township by Yarra Valley Water. Mains water is provided throughout most of the town centre and extends out along Gembrook Road and Gembrook-Launching Place Road. Although the water network is more extensive than the sewerage network, there are still many properties which are not serviced by mains water and rely on water tanks. Water is a precious resource, all new dwellings should be providing at least one water tank on site to reduce the reliance on Mains water. Water tanks need not be unsightly in nature though, inconspicuous designs such as under deck tanks or vegetative screening should be encouraged

9.5. Gas and electricity

Gas is managed by Multinet and is available throughout the town centre and extends out along Gembrook Launching Place Rd and Belgrave- Gembrook Rd. The gas network is unlikely to be extended given the rural nature of the township and the fact that Gembrook is at the end of the gas line. It is possible for individual property owners to apply for a mains extension to service their property, however this would be at the customer's cost.

Electricity is provided by SP AusNet and is available throughout Gembrook. There is a strong desire amongst the community to see the powerlines in Main Street placed underground.

9.6. Telecommunications

The telecommunications network is managed by Telstra. ADSL internet is available in Gembrook. This services properties for about 4kms along the phone lines from the exchange. There are still many properties that do not have access to this service and would like to. There was a limited upgrade to the Gembrook exchange in late 2010 to support ADSL2+, however there are limited ports available and much of the local network can not access this service.

The federal government is currently developing a policy to provide broad band internet access across Australia. A decision has not yet been made as to whether Gembrook reaches the minimum population threshold to be eligible for this program but even if it does then there will still be quite a wait before this program is implemented. The Cardinia mobile library bus visits Gembrook every Tuesday between

2:30pm and 5:30pm and includes public internet facilities. There are also internet facilities available for young people visiting the Cardinia Mobile Youth Bus (MYBus) when it's in town.

Concern was raised during community consultation regarding mobile phone reception in Gembrook. There is limited service in the town, none for some providers, and no service to the north east of the town including at Gilwell Park. This is particularly concerning with regards to fire safety and other emergency situations. Telstra has advised that there are no works planned for Gembrook in the immediate future to improve this situation. Council and the community need to continue to advocate for improved mobile phone reception in Gembrook.

9.7. Key issues

- Many properties are not connected to reticulated sewer.
- Storm water runoff into Gembrook Park.
- Management of stormwater throughout the town.
- Not all properties are connected to mains water, many rely on water tanks.
- ADSL internet access is limited, many people have to use dial up or wireless which is very slow.
- Poor mobile phone reception.

9.8. Objective

- Provide or upgrade utility services to improve the health and amenity of residents and to minimise environmental impacts.
- Promote Gembrook as a sustainable town by encouraging environmentally sustainable principles in developments.

9.9. Policy

- All new dwellings should be encouraged to provide at least one water tank on site to reduce the reliance on Mains water and stormwater runoff.
- Water tanks should be inconspicuous in design such as under deck tanks, or vegetative screening should be encouraged
- Advocate for improved telecommunications services in Gembrook.
- Require water sensitive urban design principles to be considered in new developments.
- Support the connection of all occupied properties within a sewerage area to connect to reticulated sewer systems as soon as practicable following the provision of this service.

9.10. Actions

- Under ground the power lines through Main Street.
- Investigate the impacts of stormwater runoff in Gembrook:
 - develop appropriate measures to manage existing issues and
 - plan for reducing the impact of future development on the entire drainage catchment.

10. ENVIRONMENT

10.1. Overview

The natural environment around Gembrook is considered to be a beautiful asset by locals and visitors alike. The fresh air, bird and animal life, established trees and rolling hills all contribute to what the community values about Gembrook. Visitors to Gembrook comment to locals on the beauty of the town and its surrounds. Maintaining and protecting this beautiful natural environment is a high priority for the community. Of particular threat to the natural environment in Gembrook is the invasion of pest plants and animals and clearing of vegetation on private land. There is a strong push amongst many locals for the adoption of sustainable living practices as is seen in the “Promoting Sustainable Living” theme adopted by the monthly Gembrook market. Concern has been raised over how peak oil and climate change are going to impact small communities like Gembrook and therefore the importance of adopting sustainable living practices.

10.2. Significant landscapes

With timber felling being the main source of income in the early stages of development in the town, much of the land around Gembrook has been cleared of indigenous vegetation and is used for farming purposes. Gembrook Park provides the main area of remnant vegetation within the town, being part of the Acclimatisation Park which existed in the area in the late 1800s. This was a privately run farm which sought to acclimatise exotic animals for use in Australia. The majority of the farm was sold off and cleared; however, a small section was retained for public use and is now reserved under the Crown Lands Act as a bushland reserve. Gembrook Park is a superb example of a damp forest vegetation community with spectacular mountain grey gums, mountain ash, and messmate stringy bark trees towering overhead. Habitat links for the park extend to the east along the Cockatoo Creek where some remnant vegetation remains, extending to the Bunyip State Park. This link is an important flora and fauna habitat for the long term sustainability of both parks. Beyond these remaining vegetated areas much of the landscape significance of the area lies in open farming hills which can be viewed from the ridge-line roads and rail line. The rich red soils and the patchwork of the agricultural land make a significant contribution to the beauty of the landscapes.

Much of the Gembrook Township is covered by a Significant Landscape Overlay. The purpose of this overlay is to protect the significant view lines across the countryside from the Puffing Billy railway line. The value of the scenic corridor of the Puffing Billy Railway line has been recognised by the National Trust. In addition to the views identified as significant to the Puffing Billy corridor, a significant view line exists from the Belgrave – Gembrook Road at the western end of the town, opposite the Gembrook Sports Ground.

10.3. Native vegetation

The Gembrook community values the native vegetation within the town and its surrounds and there is a strong desire to see it retained and enhanced into the future. It is the extent of native vegetation that surrounds the homes that makes Gembrook unique and creates a sense of distinct character. In order to encourage the planting and retention of native vegetation in Gembrook, residents are encouraged to refer to the *Cardinia Indigenous Plant Guide* and *Weed Identification Guide* for advice. These guides are available from Council and will be actively promoted to the community through various mediums. Information will also be provided to the Gembrook Times to remind residents as to what species are indigenous to the area and the benefits of planting them in your garden.

There are a number of “friends” groups operating in the Gembrook area, including:

- Friends of Bunyip State Park
- Friends of Kurth Kiln
- Friends of Gembrook Park
- Cardinia Hills Ragwort and Landcare Group

- SREA - Southern Ranges Environmental Alliance

The work of friends groups is invaluable in the care and protection of our environment.

Ecological Vegetation Classes

Original vegetation distribution

Prior to 1750, the area now known as Gembrook was heavily vegetated. The original vegetation distribution comprised predominantly of Shrubby Foothill Forest in the higher areas along ridgelines and Damp Forest in the lower areas and drainage lines, with wet forest along the Cockatoo Creek. There was also a small section of Clay Heathland within what is now known as Gembrook Park.

Current vegetation distribution

The current vegetation distribution is far sparser and has been significantly reduced in area. Of that which is left in and around the Gembrook Township it is mostly either shrubby foothill forest or damp forest, with sections of wet forest dispersed along the Cockatoo Creek. All of these classes are considered to be locally common in the area as, despite being quite sparsely distributed in the Gembrook Township, they have been subject to little degradation over a majority of the wider area.

Shrubby Foothill forest is an open forest up to 40m tall dominated by Messmate, usually in conjunction with Brown Stringybark and/or Narrow-leaf Peppermint. The understory includes a range of narrow-leaved and prickly shrubs, with ground layer vegetation dominated by patches of grasses, sedges and ferns. Damp forest is an open forest up to 40m tall dominated by Mountain Grey Gum and Messmate. The understory includes broad-leaved lower trees and shrubs, along with a range of smaller shrubs, ferns, herbs and grasses favouring moister forest conditions (typically includes Rough Tree-fern and Forest Wire-grass).

Biolinks

The Cardinia Environment Coalition in their publication Biolinks Project Action Plan (2008) define biolinks as linkages that improve ecological connectivity between patches of natural habitat. Ecological connectivity refers to the way in which the quality, structure and spatial arrangement of habitat in the landscape affects movements of energy, materials and organisms. These movements are vital for maintaining the health of species, communities and ecological processes that are fundamental to natural environments, as well as human wellbeing.

The Cardinia Environment Coalition suggest that the most easily recognisable type of biolink is a continuous linear strip or corridor of indigenous vegetation between habitat patches. This could include vegetation on private property and also roadside vegetation and creek lines. While continuity is certainly preferable from an environmental perspective, ecological connectivity can also be improved by creating discontinuous stepping stones of vegetation.

Several key biolink corridors have been identified in the Gembrook township region include the following;

1. Remnant vegetation on private land adjacent to Collie Road
2. Shepherd Creek East and West branches
3. Bond Road and adjacent remnant vegetation on private land to the north and south.
4. Gembrook Launching Place Road
5. Station Road/Puffing Billy Railway line
6. Remnant vegetation North of Beenak East Road (south of Shepherd Creek East branch.)
7. Remnant adjacent to Belvedere Court
8. Red Road
9. Remnant vegetation on private land adjacent to Red Road
10. Gembrook Park

11. Blackwood Lane
12. Cockatoo Creek
13. Cockatoo Creek to Blackwood Lane

These sites have continuous vegetation that enables them to function as biolink corridors around the township.

Figure 19

Biolinks

Gembrook Township Strategy



1:15000 @ A3

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Puffing Billy | Collie Rd | Sheperd Creek - West Branch | Red Road | Cockatoo Creek |
| Waterway | Sheperd Creek - East Branch | Station Road | Red Road | Cockatoo Creek to Blackwood Lane |
| Biolink Corridors | Bond Road | Beenak East Road | Gembrook Park | |
| Biolink Patch | Gembrook Launching Place Rd | Belvedere Court | Blackwood Lane | |



Biosites

Biosites are areas which have been identified to hold great biological significance, of which contribute to the conservation of Victoria's native biodiversity.

Biosite information is stored on a DSE database. This database documents the biological assets present at a biologically significant site, including EVCs, threatened flora, breeding sites, species richness and diversity, wildlife corridors, scientific and educational value, and FFG listed species. The database records threats and management activities for each asset and/or site. Land uses and managers are also recorded, in addition to location details and information sources. The database also provides a level of significance for the site in a National, State, Regional and Local context. Each biosite can occur on one or more land tenures.

Bunyip State Park has been identified as a biosite of National Significance. Over 550 species of plants and 11 ecological vegetation classes have been identified within the park. The community pointed out during consultations that there is an incredible variety of insects that can be found in the area when compared to other towns. This is a fairly unique feature of the area and is most likely attributed to the "buffer zone" function that Gembrook plays. Gembrook Park is also identified within the same biosite of National Significance. Many private properties also fall within the mapping of this large National biosite.

10.4. Natural drainage lines- creeks and waterways

Water from the north east through to the north west, of the township flows into Shepherd Creek. Water from the south east through to the south west of the township flows into Cockatoo Creek. Each of these creek systems ultimately flows into Woori Yallock Creek, which is a major tributary of the Yarra River. The Woori Yallock Creek and its tributaries supports a range of threatened flora and fauna, platypus and several native fish and frog species. This creek is listed as having very high regional importance in the Port Phillip and Western Port River Health Strategy.

The establishment of an integrated drainage strategy that is discussed in the section on drainage lines directly impacts on the health of the Woori Yallock Creek.

10.5. Weed management

Weeds pose a serious threat to the environmental, agricultural and community values in Cardinia Shire. The threats and associated costs of weed invasion are numerous. Weeds lead to reduced farm productivity, the displacement of native flora and fauna and contribute significantly to land degradation. Cardinia Shire Council is guided by the *Weed Management Strategy 2007 (WMS 2007)* for weed control across the municipality including Gembrook. Works are strategically directed by the Weed Threat Matrix which features in the Weed Management Strategy.

One weed that has been of particular concern in the hills region including in Gembrook is *Pittosporum undulatum*, Sweet Pittosporum. Sweet Pittosporum is a large shrub or small tree native to some parts of Gippsland, with a natural distribution possibly extending as far west as Westernport. Sweet pittosporum has now spread to areas outside its previous range and has also become more common within some parts of its natural range, perhaps in response to altered fire regimes or because it is a good coloniser after disturbance. The very dense shade beneath this plant tends to exclude other plants and it is often regarded as undesirable, although it does have the advantage of successfully excluding many other weeds. Sweet pittosporum has been recognised by the Department of Sustainability and Environment as a high threat weed.

Amendment C123 to the Cardinia Planning Scheme which was approved on 31 August 2009 modifies the planning scheme to allow Sweet Pittosporum to be removed, lopped or destroyed without the need for a planning permit within the Shire of Cardinia.

Gembrook Township, including the outer postcode areas has been part of a pilot project initiated in 2007/08. This project is called the *6 Towns Weed Control Project* and has been successful in tackling roadside weed species, in particular blackberry, ragwort and Sweet Pittosporum. This project is now in its 3rd year

and the results of an on ground audit of Gembrook has revealed a pleasing 90% reduction in Blackberry, 100% reduction in Ragwort, and a significant reduction in the abundance of Sweet Pittosporum plants. This project will continue to monitor the roadsides for the targeted weed species and consolidate the progress already made in Gembrook. Land management agencies supporting this project include Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water and VicRoads. Community support has also been evident with an increase in local landowners taking responsibility on their own land for controlling weeds. Council's Weed Grant Scheme allows for any landowner to claim for a reimbursement for herbicide cost incurred when treating weeds.

VicRoads are required to comply with the requirements of the Catchment and Land Protection Act (CaLP Act) and must remove weeds nominated under this Act accordingly. This covers only a section of weeds, with regards to other weeds, VicRoads advise that they do monitor their roadsides for weeds and have a rolling program to remove them. VicRoads are keen to work with Council and community groups to target specific areas or specific weeds in partnership with community initiatives. If you are aware of significant patches of roadside weeds which need removing you can advise Council or VicRoads so that they are included in their weed removal program.

Other weed issues impacting on Gembrook are in the areas of natural bushland such as the Gembrook Park. Weeds occurring here are managed by contractors employed by Cardinia Shire Council and by volunteers from the Friends of Gembrook Park. Wandering Tradescantia, Forget me not, Tree tobacco and Creeping Buttercup are some of the species persistent in the park. Weed invasions from neighbouring properties continue to threaten this park.

The three weeds which were raised as the biggest concern to the community were Ragwort, Blackberry, and Thistles. There is a strong desire in the community to see these weeds eradicated from the area but this will take an all-inclusive approach by the whole community.

There are also a number of pest animals found in and around Gembrook including: Indian Myna, deer, goats, rabbits, foxes, dogs, cats, Cockatoos and European Wasps. In February 2010 Parks Victoria advised that in the previous 9 months they had caught 15 wild dogs which are a major threat to both native animals and farm animals alike. Hunting permits can be obtained from the Department of Sustainability and Environment in Box Hill to shoot deer in Gembrook but only at night.

10.6. Wildfire management

Parts of Gembrook are vulnerable to wildfire due to their vegetation cover and topography. Under the Building Regulations 2006 construction must be undertaken in accordance with the Australian Standard for Construction of Buildings in Bushfire Prone areas (AS3959). Where properties are subject to a Wildfire Management Overlay (WMO), they must also meet CFA requirements associated with the WMO.

Council has a Municipal Fire Prevention Plan 2010 which aims to reduce the effect of or minimise the risk of fire events that cause loss of life, livelihood, and community assets, and adverse damage to the environment. In addition to this plan, Council also has in place a Municipal Wildfire Preparedness Plan (MWPP) 2005, which is actively implemented during the fire season along with plans for various reserves. The aim of the MWPP is to increase the ability of the communities to withstand the impact of wildfire, and to help with practical risk reduction, taking into account the frequency and severity of wildfire occurrences. The MWPP is targeted specifically at physical works designed to minimise the risk of, and damage caused by, wildfire. Council also supports community education programs undertaken by the Country Fire Authority.

The Municipal Wildfire Preparedness Plan 2005 identifies seven priority areas for protection within Gembrook. Each area identified was geographically defined and ranked in order of risk as either High (8-10), Medium (5-7) or Low (1-4) as indicated in Table 5:

Table 6: Priority Areas for bushfire protection

Priority Area	Fire Risk Rating
G1-Gilwell Park	8
G2-Livio Drive	8
G3-The Avenue/Boyd Road	5
G4-Tonimbuk Road	8
G5-Tynong Road	5
G6-Bessie Creek Road	6
G7-Currawong Drive	8

Source: Cardinia Shire Council, 2005

The detailed management treatments within the 7 priority areas have been outlined in Appendix C. The actions for the above priority areas outlined in the MWPP will continue to be implemented by Council in collaboration with the Country Fire Authority, Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Gembrook community.

A Wildfire Management Overlay has been implemented into the Cardinia Planning Scheme which will trigger the need for a planning permit for development in areas prone to wildfire and is in line with the current building controls. A risk based approach will prevent development on those parcels of land previously subdivided, that are considered as being inappropriate for development under the Wildfire Management Overlay.

An issue raised during community consultation was why the town dam wasn't being used for storing water for fire fighting purposes. Upon enquiry of the CFA it was reported that the use of the town dam was investigated a few years ago by the CFA and it was determined that it was not feasible and unnecessary to reinstate the dam for fire fighting purposes.

Two 30,000lt strategic water tanks were installed late last year to provide greater access to water supply in fire suppression of a bushfire or structural fire in the area. One tank was installed on the corner of Crichton and Gembrook-Tonimbuk Roads and the other tank was installed at the intersection of Parker and Beenak East Roads in Gembrook. If the community feel that there is a need to provide greater access to water to the emergency services in the event of a fire, then they need to make recommendations to their local fire brigade. Each fire brigade has a delegate that sits on the Cardinia Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee Advisory Group and that delegate can bring those recommendations to this group for consideration

It is important that residents clean up around their homes prior to the bushfire season. Although most residents are aware that Council offers a hard waste collection twice a year, few appear to realise that this is also a green waste service. It is also important that the grass on your property is not allowed to become overgrown throughout the fire season for both the safety of yourself and your family, but also the community around you.

Concern was raised by the community regarding the potential for roadside vegetation to act as a wick for wild fires. Of particular concern was Mountain Road given the fuel loads on the sides of the road due to fallen trees. At the same time, there is also great value held by members of the community in the environmental contribution that indigenous vegetation along a number of roadsides provides. It was suggested that a review should be undertaken of roadside vegetation in the area and the need for tactical fuel breaks. This would need to be coupled with consideration of the role that the roadsides are playing as biolinks for native fauna. Those sections of roadside vegetation that are found to be particularly significant should be signed accordingly. A lot of the main roads in the area are classified arterial roads which fall under the jurisdiction of VicRoads, in which case, Council's role would be limited to advocacy.

The Gembrook Community Centre car park has been designated by Council as a neighbourhood safer place as a place of last resort during the passage of a bushfire. The community would like to see the

Community centre itself become designated as the neighbourhood safer place. The community centre building was investigated and assessed by a sub-committee of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee using the assessment criteria contained in the Municipal Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan and it was recommended to Council that it was unsuitable to be designated as a neighbourhood safer place.

The CFA have prepared a township protection plan for Gembrook which sets out how to prepare for, act during and survive the Bushfire season. This publication can be downloaded from the CFA website www.cfa.vic.gov.au.

10.7. Environmental sustainability

Sustainability is defined as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs’. Topics encompassed in environmental sustainability include: climate change, development and built environment, water scarcity, waste minimisation and natural systems.

There is a strong desire in the community for Gembrook to be known as a sustainable community. Some hard lessons have been learnt in the past by the farming community like the consequences of Dieldrin use and aerial spraying. Past sources of pollution like Kurth Kiln now have an environmental purpose. In order to be a truly sustainable town, the population and the provision of jobs need to grow at the same rate. The community does not want Gembrook to become a dormitory town. There is a desire for Gembrook to become self sufficient as food security becomes a growing concern.

There is a growing desire among local residents to promote home vegetable gardens and the planting of fruit trees on public land. The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2009-2013 identified similar public interest in planting fruit trees and has allocated an action to “explore the opportunity to plant fruit trees in community spaces” in the Plan. This action may support a pilot initiative in a township such as Gembrook with community support. This action contributes to opportunities to find local solutions to food security issues within the Shire.

10.8. Key issues

- Weeds
- Pest animals
- Wildfire
- Indigenous vegetation loss
- Impacts of peak oil and climate change

10.9. Objectives

- Promote Gembrook as a sustainable town by encouraging environmentally sustainable principles in developments.
- Value, protect and restore the natural environment and sites of heritage significance.
- Protect the environmental and landscape values of the area.
- Protect and conserve indigenous flora and fauna.
- Protect and improve waterways
- Minimise the risk of, and damage caused by, wildfire

10.10. Policy

- Encourage the planting of indigenous vegetation.
- Protect biolinks and biosites.

- Encourage the eradication of weed species.
- Enforce the eradication of noxious weeds.
- Encourage residents to clean up around their homes prior to the bushfire season
- Incorporate wildfire protection measures in new buildings (particularly dwellings) as set out in the Wildfire Management Overlay provisions in relation to building, siting and design, access, water supply and vegetation management.
- Promote and foster Gembrook as a sustainable town.
- Ensure the Cardinia Indigenous Plant Guide and Weed Identification Guide are included in “welcome kits” for new residents.

10.11. Actions

- Provide information for the Gembrook Times to remind existing residents of what vegetation species are indigenous to the area and the benefits of residents planting them in their garden.
- Undertake a review of roadside vegetation in Gembrook which assesses the need for tactical fuel breaks as well as the value of the vegetation as a biolink as part of the review of Council’s Roadside Management Plan.
- Install a new brochure box in Gembrook Park
- Implement the treatments set out for the seven priority areas in Gembrook as outlined in the Municipal Wildfire Preparedness Plan (2005), or any future updated policy, including fire management plans for bushland reserves, fire breaks, buffer zones, water points and community fire programs.

11. HERITAGE

11.1. Overview

The Gembrook community has expressed a desire to maintain and enhance the heritage values of the area. It has been said that it is the history of the town that links many of the locals. The following sections give a brief outline of both aboriginal cultural heritage and post-contact heritage associated with Gembrook.

11.2. Aboriginal cultural heritage

Prior to the arrival of white settlers, the Cardinia District was long occupied by Indigenous peoples. It is anticipated that Indigenous people have probably occupied the area for over 35,000 years. During that time, there have been significant environmental changes within the region, which have affected the use of the land by indigenous people, the technology used by them and the location of indigenous archaeological sites.

Being located on a ridgeline, what is now known as the town of Gembrook was traditionally occupied by two tribes of the Kulin nation. To the north side of the ridge line (what is now Belgrave-Gembrook Road) lived the Wurrundjeri people and to the south side lived the Bunurong people. The Bunurong and Wurrundjeri intermarried and traded, moving freely across each other's territories. The contact was so frequent and so amicable, according to some observers, that the boundaries between would not necessarily have been rigidly defined.

The Bunyip State Park is recognised as an area of Aboriginal cultural significance. The name Bunyip is taken from the Aboriginal word "Buneep" which refers to a dark furry animal with a round face, small ears and fiery eyes that glow in the dark which featured in local Aboriginal storytelling. It is said to be a spirit that punishes bad people. The local aboriginal people traditionally stayed away from the swamps of the Bunyip River as they believed the Bunyip lived in the swamps. Many early settlers heard this story and never set up their tents near a "Bunyip hole".

Aboriginal people are known to have used fire to regularly burn undergrowth and flush out animals for hunting. It is thought that their regular use of fire may have helped the forests of the Dandenong Ranges to thrive free of undergrowth until the Europeans arrived and changed these patterns.

Today the Bunurong people have very little access to their traditional land, and actively struggle for the recognition and protection of Bunurong cultural heritage and their cultural environment through the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation. The Wurundjeri Tribe Land Council represents the interests and cultural aspirations of the Wurundjeri people, the Traditional Owners of the Melbourne and Greater Melbourne region.

All proposed developments, redevelopments and subdivisions need to be mindful of the requirements specified by the Aboriginal Heritage Act (2006) and Aboriginal Heritage Regulations (2007) governing the management of pre- and post-contact Aboriginal sites.

11.3. Post-contact heritage

The Cardinia Shire Heritage study 1996 identified 17 sites of heritage significance in Gembrook and 13 of them have been incorporated into the Cardinia Planning Scheme through the Heritage Overlay.

Table 7: Sites of Heritage Significance

Heritage Place	Address	Value	Planning Scheme Reference
Upper Ferntree Gully to Gembrook railway		Regional	HO4
Sunset Guest House, Garden	65 Beenak East Road	Regional	HO22
Kurth Charcoal Kiln	Off Beenak Road	State	HO21
Gilwell Park Scout Camp and Landscaping	Gembrook Launching Place Road	State	HO40
Gembrook Park, part former zoological & acclimatisation society reserve	Off Gembrook Road	Regional	HO38
Californian Redwoods, Gembrook Park	Off Gembrook Road	Regional	HO37
Ranges Hotel & trees	Main Street	Regional	HO62
Sacred Heart Catholic Church, monteray pines	93 Main Street	Regional	HO63
Gembrook Union, later Uniting Church	438 Mountain Road	Regional	HO80
Oak avenue	305 Mountain Road	Regional	HO79
Mt. Eirene Guest House	Lot 28 Mt. Eirene Road	Regional	HO82
Bhutan Pines (8) at Gembrook railway station site	Station Road	Regional	HO61
Ure farm complex, Gembrook north post office, later Silver Wells	330 Ure Road	State	HO125 & HO134
Wattle bank	18 Innes Road	Local	
Coffee Palace, now take away food store and residence	Main Street	Local	
Gembrook State School No. 2506, Oaks etc	Main Street.	Local	
House	155 Mt. Burnett Road	Local	

Source: Butler, G and Associates (1996)

Cardinia Local Heritage Study Review

Between 2006 and 2008 Council undertook the Cardinia Local Heritage Study Review. The purpose of the study was to complete the identification, assessment and documentation of places of post-contact cultural significance within Cardinia Shire and to make recommendations for their future conservation. In relation to Gembrook, the study identified the Gembrook Commercial precinct in Main Street as significant and recommended it be covered by a heritage overlay in the Cardinia Planning Scheme. This precinct contains a number of early twentieth century and interwar commercial buildings, interspersed with a few residential properties set back from the street, post-war properties, and undeveloped lots.

Avenue plantings of oak, flowering gum and Blackwoods unify the streetscape. Contributory elements include:

- The Oak, Flowering gum and Blackwood street plantings
- Mature trees in J.A.C. Russel Reserve
- 66 Main Street – Former Coffee Palace
- 72 Main Street – Post office
- 73 Main Street – Ranges Hotel
- 75 Main Street – Curiosity shop
- 77 Main Street – Garage (The Motorist, Gembrook)
- 79 Main Street – Former garage
- 81 Main Street – Weatherboard residence
- 89 Main Street – c.1930s red brick shop (Rubee Rose)
- 93 Main Street – Sacred Heart Catholic Church
- 97 Main Street – Former general store (Charlottes café)

68, 83-87 and 91 Main Street were considered non contributory.

The study identifies a number of specific conservation guidelines to preserve the heritage significance of the precinct, these are as follows:

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS:

The conservation policy may be achieved by ensuring that:

1. New buildings are built to the frontage (ie. with a zero setback).
2. New buildings have a massing to the street that is consistent with the parapet height of adjoining Significant or Contributory buildings.
3. Above verandah signage is limited and is sited in historically appropriate locations on buildings.
4. Building additions above the existing parapet level are to be set back to avoid being viewed from the opposite side of the street from an average height of 1.7 metres.
5. New infill development reflects the traditional proportions and rhythm of architectural elements on adjoining Significant or contributory buildings.

TREES:

In order to conserve the heritage significance of the identified significant trees, it is recommended that the following guidelines are used in the future management or development of the place:

1. Ensure that the tree/s survives in good condition according to their normally expected lifespan. Regular maintenance should include monitoring condition, pruning, and pest and disease management.
2. Develop a strategy for replacement when the tree/s becomes senescent or dangerous. Document the replacement process (photographs and written record before, during and after) for future record.
3. Replace “like with like” species to maintain the significance and integrity of the vegetation fabric, unless an alternative planting scheme has been devised in accordance with an approved management plan.
4. Manage surrounding vegetation to maintain the integrity and condition of the tree/s. Remove weed vegetation species.

5. Ensure that any future development, or changes in the immediate environmental conditions, adjacent to the tree/s does not have a detrimental impact upon the integrity and condition of the tree/s. Investigate ways in which adjacent development could include or coordinate with recovery and improvement of the tree/s integrity and condition.

GENERAL:

In order to conserve the heritage significance of this precinct, it is policy to:

1. Conserve the fabric of the building/s or other elements that contribute to the significance of the precinct. This includes the original fabric as well as fabric that may demonstrate important successive stages in the historic development of the precinct and/or provide evidence of changing architectural styles or techniques.
2. Encourage the restoration or recreation of missing features based on historic evidence.
3. Encourage a contextual approach to new development within the precinct that is complementary in form, scale and materials to the contributory buildings and other elements, but is clearly contemporary in design.
4. Ensure that new development does not become a dominant visual element within the precinct.
5. Discourage the demolition of contributory buildings except where it can be demonstrated that:
 - The building is structurally unsound and cannot be repaired without undertaking significant replacement of fabric that would diminish the integrity of the building, and
 - The proposed replacement building embodies design excellence that is complementary in form, scale and materials to the contributory buildings of primary significance and other elements, but is clearly contemporary in approach.
6. Demolition of part of a contributory building may be allowed when it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the responsible authority that, as appropriate:
 - The part to be demolished is not significant or the part demolition will not adversely affect the significance of the place, or
 - It will assist in the long term conservation or maintenance of the place, or
 - It will support the viability of the existing use of the place or will facilitate a new use that is compatible with the on-going conservation of the building, or
 - It will upgrade the building to meet contemporary living standards such as improving energy efficiency.
7. Conserve contributory plantings, and maintain a visual relationship between the plantings and associated buildings or other structures.
8. Retain views of contributory buildings and plantings from the street, and other views identified as contributing to the historic character of the precinct.
9. Encourage the removal of non-significant or intrusive elements, particularly where this would assist in revealing or interpreting the significance of the place.
10. In the case of subdivision of the property, encourage the retention of the significant buildings, trees and related elements on one lot.

In order for the above guidelines to become statutory controls in the Cardinia Planning Scheme, it is recommended that, as an action of this strategy, relevant planning controls be prepared for the Main Street heritage precinct which incorporates the conservation guidelines.

In addition to the Main Street precinct, the Cardinia Local Heritage Study Review also identified “Wattle Bank” at 18 Innes Road as being of individual significance and recommended that it be covered by a heritage overlay in the Cardinia Planning Scheme.

Silverwells

“Silverwells” is located on a private property about 3km outside the township of Gembrook. It is the remains of a collection of buildings of the original settlement in the area. The buildings are classified by the National Trust and Heritage Victoria. Whilst they have fallen into significant disrepair, their significance lies in the fact that they are a relatively “in tact” representation of a historic settlement, including trees and the original well called “Silver Well” which the property was named after.

The future protection of Silver Wells is currently an issue that Council is working on and will be seeking funds from State Government to carry out necessary conservation works on the Original slab hut post office. Tourism opportunities will also be a consideration given the overall support of the local Gembrook community. A suggestion has been made that “Gulf Station” in Yarra Glen is a good working model that could be drawn from. The community has expressed the view that if Council is to spend money on the Silverwells then it should be with a view to excise the site. The relocation of these buildings to another site would not be desirable and should only happen as a last resort as the site itself is significant in that it marks the original location of the Gembrook North township.

11.4. Environmental heritage

Significant Trees

The Cardinia Shire Council Significant Tree Study (May 2009) was undertaken to provide a basis for the identification of significant trees within the Shire of Cardinia with the view to providing planning protection for these trees under the Cardinia Planning Scheme and/or the Victorian Heritage Register and Victorian Heritage Inventory. As part of Stage 1 of this process a list of 45 sites was provided for assessment. The following trees in Gembrook were identified as part of this study:

Table 8: Significant trees

Address	Species/Site name
Gembrook Park Rd	<i>Tilia cordata</i> - Small-leaved Linden
Gembrook Main Street	<i>Quercus canariensis</i> , <i>Q.sp.</i> , Algerian Oak (Avenue)
Redwood Drive	Gembrook Avenue of Honour
Ure Rd	<i>Eucalyptus obliqua</i> , Messmate

Source: John Patrick, 2009

The community would like to recognise the importance of Gembrook Park as a site of living heritage. It needs to be recognised for its social, environmental and community heritage value.

11.5. Opportunities for heritage conservation and management

The Avenue of Honour trees are of great historic value to the community. Council needs to develop a maintenance program for these trees to ensure they are protected long into the future.

There is a desire amongst the community to see a historical museum established in Gembrook where people could donate local heritage items and historical photographs. The opportunity may exist for a museum component to be combined as part of a future tourism centre development. Such a venture is likely to require strong community support to run.

The opportunity exists for community groups or individuals to apply for up to \$5000- in support of projects to conserve historical local buildings and objects through the Cardinia Heritage Grant Program. It is possible for large scale projects to be awarded funding for separate stages of restorations works. All grants are awarded on a competitive basis and applicants must match grant funding in dollars or in kind support such as labour. Eligibility criteria and application forms are available on Council’s website.

11.6. Key issues

- Development which detracts from the heritage significance of the surrounding area.
- The preservation and restoration of Silverwells.
- Protection of sites of heritage significance.

11.7. Objectives

- Value, protect and restore the natural environment and sites of heritage significance.

11.8. Policy

- All proposed developments, redevelopments and subdivisions need to be mindful of the requirements specified by the Aboriginal Heritage Act (2006) and Aboriginal Heritage Regulations (2007) governing the management of pre- and post-contact Aboriginal sites
- Preserve and enhance the significance of sites identified as being of heritage significance in Gembrook.
- Encourage developments to respond to the conservation guidelines in the Cardinia Local Heritage Study Review when considering development applications in Main Street.
- Maintain and enhance the heritage values of the area
- Encourage tourism developments to demonstrate a link with the heritage aspects of Gembrook.

11.9. Actions

- Introduce a heritage overlay to protect the Gembrook Commercial precinct in Main Street in the Cardinia Planning Scheme.
- Introduce a heritage overlay to protect “Wattle Bank” at 18 Innes Road in the Cardinia Planning Scheme.
- Introduce relevant controls into the Cardinia Planning Scheme for the Main Street heritage precinct which incorporate the conservation guidelines from the Cardinia Local Heritage Study Review.
- Introduce a heritage overlay which protects the trees identified as significant in the Cardinia Shire Council Significant Tree Study (May 2009).
- Develop a maintenance program for the Avenue of Honour trees.

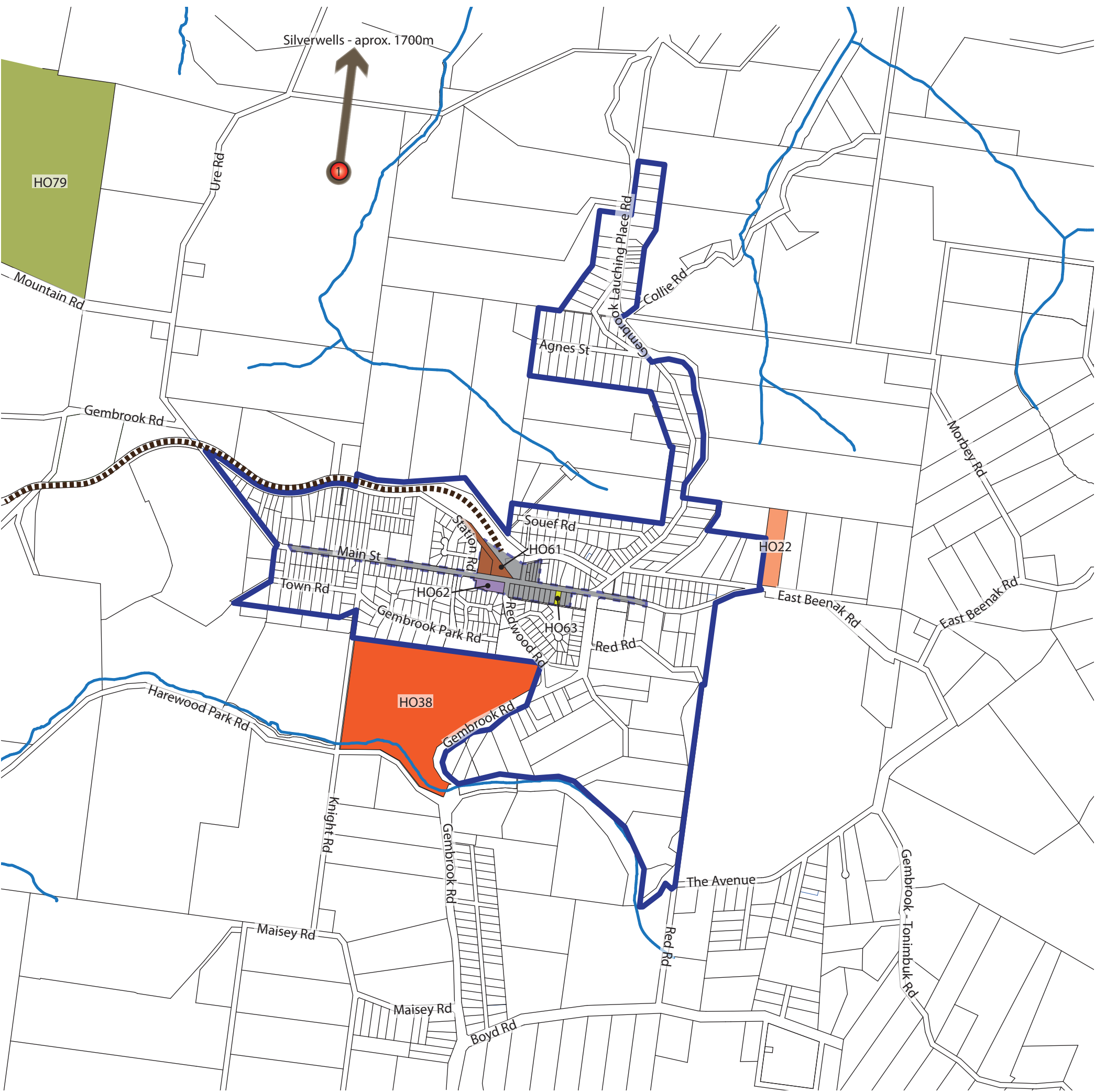


Caretaker's Residence at Kurth Kiln

Figure 20

Heritage Sites

Gembrook Township Strategy



1:15000 @ A3



Puffing Billy



Waterway



Urban Growth Boundary



Gembrook Park - HO38



Ranges Hotel - HO62



Sacred Heart Catholic Church - HO63



Puffing Billy Station - HO61



Sunset Guest House - HO22



Oak Avenue - HO79



Silverwells - HO125



Gembrook Commercial Precinct - Potential



12. TOWN CENTRE DESIGN

12.1. Existing features

The Gembrook town centre is a small strip commercial centre located in Main Street, particularly between Station Road and Gembrook-Launching Place Road. The present shopping strip retains a random pattern of development and is dispersed with a mix of retail, and residential uses. The built form is characterised by predominantly single storey design with many of the facades including a parapet form above.

12.2. Town character

Character is a distinctive identity of a particular place. Gembrook has a definitive character which needs to be enhanced. To preserve the township's architectural character all new development along Main Street needs to complement the existing in terms of form and scale. There is a desire amongst the community to maintain the heritage character in the presentation of Main Street.

12.3. Urban design

Urban design shapes perceptions of a place. It contributes to the way people interact and experience the environment around them, in a streetscape sense, this is referred to as the public realm. Attractive outdoor areas contribute to a high quality public realm which leads to increased usage and activated public spaces. Increased activity improves economic performance of local businesses, people have greater civic pride and ensure commitment to the community through greater community participation in activities. The public realm in Main Street, Gembrook needs to be enhanced.

A place with a well connected pedestrian network enhances safety by encouraging natural surveillance, walking and cycling and reducing vehicle emissions through fewer cars being used for short trips. Gembrook requires additional pedestrian and cycle paths to improve pedestrian connectivity.

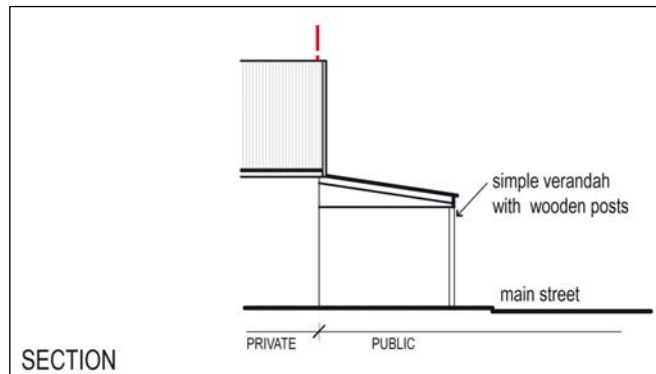
12.4. Town centre design guidelines

As outlined in Chapter 5, there are three defined precincts for the town centre of Gembrook.: Service and mixed use at the western end, central retail in the middle, and arts and community at the eastern end. The following urban design guidelines have been prepared to assist landowners in designing new development in the town centre as well as to assist Council in assessing whether proposed developments present an appropriate design response.

Front setback

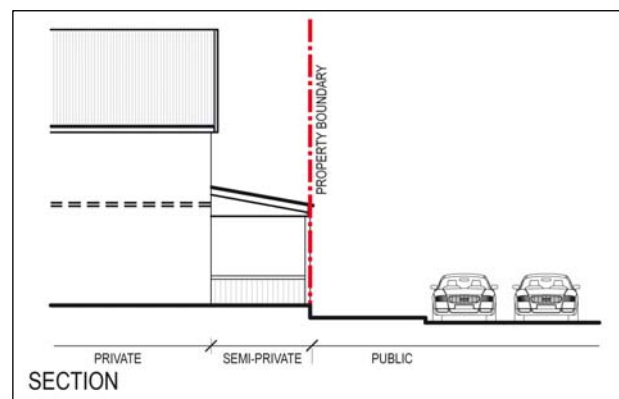
- The front setbacks shall be zero for all new buildings fronting Main Street in the central retail precinct. This will encourage a strong built edge along the street.
- Front setbacks for carparking shall be avoided. Car parking should be provided in designated, consolidated areas rather than in an ad-hoc fashion.
- The front setback in the Service & Mixed Use Precinct and the arts and community precinct should have regard to the existing character particularly of heritage buildings.





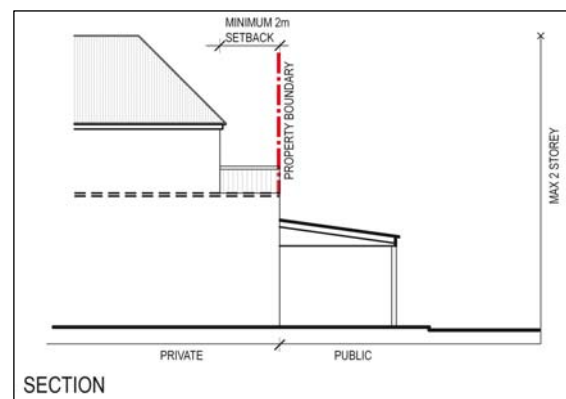
Building Height

- Buildings should not be more than two storeys in height.
- In the case of residential buildings on Main Street with zero setback and semi-private space at ground level the upper storey is not required to be set back.
- In the case of Mixed Use development the upper storey of a building should be set back a minimum of 2.0m behind the ground floor.



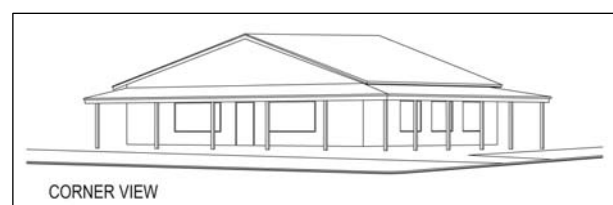
Mixed Development

- The main street will be livelier, safer and more viable if there are people using it beyond normal trading hours. Mixing uses within buildings as well as along street frontages can add interest and vitality along Main Street.
- There is an absence of service lane access at the rear of lots in the Service & Mixed Use Precinct, therefore the amenity of such dwellings requires particular attention to entrances, driveways and private outdoor spaces.



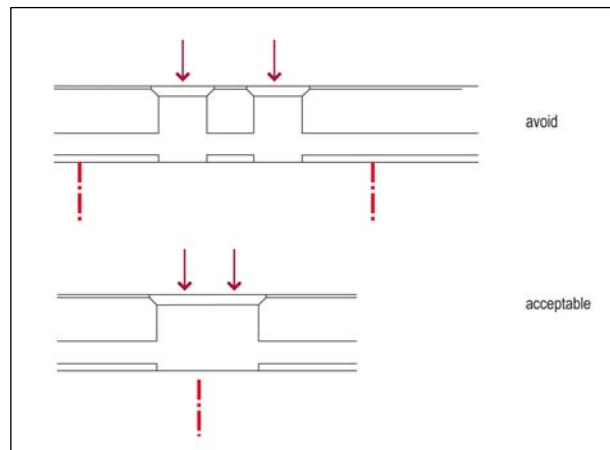
Corner sites

- Corner sites should actively address both frontages at street level and provide an emphasised feature such as an articulated roof form or more prominent verandah design with fenestration that connects the two frontages.



Vehicle access to properties

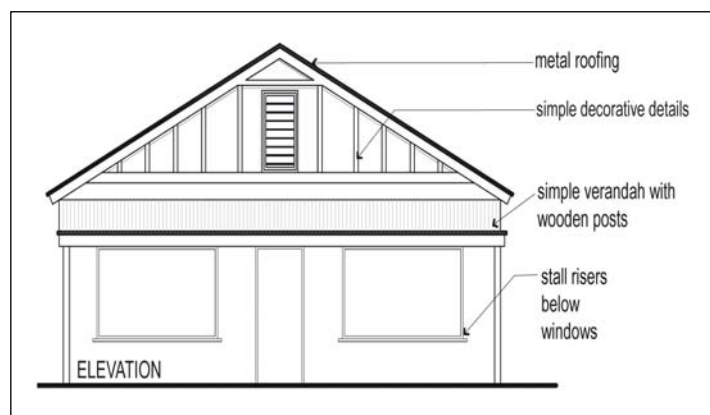
- No more than one driveway crossover should be provided per lot.
- Where possible, driveway crossovers should be directly adjoining to minimize the number of access points onto Main Street.
- Garages should be set back to the rear and should not front Main Street.



Built form and building design

To preserve the township architectural character all new development along Main Street needs to complement the existing in terms of form and scale.

- Ensure that buildings do not have excessive decorative details in their design.
- Verandahs should be included in the design of buildings and should front the street.
- Verandahs should not be cantilevered but should be supported with wooden posts using a simple skillion style, in keeping with existing buildings in Gembrook.
- The verandah should not use bullnose style, lace ironwork, decorative fretwork or federation brackets to posts, simple verandah styles are encouraged.
- Verandahs should be single storey only.
- Use traditional elements in shop facades such as stall risers beneath windows.
- Do not introduce large modern plate glass windows to ground level.



Parapets

- New buildings that contain parapets shall avoid monotonous flat parapet lines.
- Parapets should have minimum indentations and patterns on panels.
- Parapets should have variation in heights and designs so as to provide additional interest to the street.
- Parapets should avoid using curved profiles.



Fences

Front fences are important for defining the public realm. Picket fences and hedges along the non commercial development predominates the streetscape of Gembrook. Currently vacant lots with chain and wire fencing detract from the character of Gembrook.

- Fencing should only be used in residential development, unless along a vacant lot.
- Picket fence is recommended, to contribute to the character of Main Street.
- Fences should be of modest height and should not exceed 0.9m at the street frontage.
- Metal panel fences, chain and wire fencing, pool fencing, spear tops, aluminium lace panels and bagged masonry fences should not be used.



Materials and colours

- Visible roof materials, fencing materials and colours should blend with existing buildings on Main Street.
- Colours of external materials should be muted to avoid being an intrusive element.
- Highly reflective colours and surfaces should be avoided.
- The use of weatherboard cladding with metal roofing is encouraged, in keeping with the existing streetscape character.
- Consistent and harmonious use of good quality, durable materials is encouraged.



Commercial Signs

Signs are a necessary and informative element of retail and commercial areas and add interest and vitality to the public realm. The signage should be located appropriately to enhance the amenity of an area and reinforce its local character. Careful consideration needs to be given to signage within the Main Street of Gembrook to ensure that it does not detract from the character of the town.



- Signage should be incorporated into the building façade through the use of parapets rather than having free standing signage above verandahs.
- Signs should not dominate the architecture of the building to which they are fixed.
- There should be no billboard signage and minimal signage across the front façade.
- Glazed facade areas should not be painted out or otherwise applied with signage that covers more than 50% of the window area.
- The size, location and style of the signage should serve the required purpose of the sign in the context of the local environment.
- Signs should not be placed in locations which detract from a building, such as above parapets or as large projections or over-large fascias



Sustainable design

Gembrook is located in the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges and should continue to strive to fit into the landscape as if part of the natural environment. This means that small measures can ensure sustainable outcomes for Gembrook. Sustainability requires an ability to adapt to the unknown future. Sustainability also means efficient use of resources and limiting the degradation of the natural environment. Sustainable design relies on an awareness of the short and long term consequences of any transformation of the environment.

Socially Gembrook can promote sustainability by being an inclusive and welcoming place, through its community facilities and public space. Improving the amenities in Main Street through a mix of retail and other uses will activate Gembrook. Well defined pedestrian routes with clear sightlines will make residents and visitors feel safe and increase activity while discouraging crime.

There are a number of ways Gembrook can improve its environmental sustainability and impact on the environment. The provision of cycle parking facilities will encourage people to ride instead of short driving trips. Enhanced bus stops will improve the patronage of public transport. This will contribute to minimise fossil fuel usage associated with personal transport. The incorporation of tree pits in the outstands proposed as part of the renewal of Main Street will provide an opportunity to mitigate stormwater pollution. Stormwater will flow off the road through the grates and into the tree pit where it is slowly filtered through sandy soil and gravel layers back to the drain. This will improve the stormwater quality and flow of otherwise untreated runoff which adversely affects rivers and creeks. The use of recycled materials in the street furniture will also contribute to environmental sustainability.

Gembrook can become more economically sustainable through the provision of more local jobs. There is a desire in the community to ensure that Gembrook does not become a dormitory town and that there is the opportunity for residents to work locally.

12.5. Revitalisation of Main Street

As is outlined in chapter 5 and Appendix A, a streetscape renewal scheme is needed for Main Street to make it a more pleasant, pedestrian friendly and inviting environment. There is a need to provide new street furniture including seats, rubbish bins, bike racks and drinking fountains in both Main Street and JAC Russel Park. Any proposed works should be conducted in consultation with the community and should be consistent with the desired old world character of Main Street.

12.6. Key issues

- Development in Main Street Gembrook is somewhat scattered, leaving the town without a cohesive feel.
- Inappropriate development
- Main Street needs reviving

12.7. Objectives

- Make Gembrook a walkable town, better connecting the town to open space and encouraging recreation and active transport opportunities
- Establish an attractive, low speed, pedestrian friendly environment throughout the town centre.
- Enhance and consolidate the town centre
- Value, protect and restore the natural environment and sites of heritage significance.
- Facilitate developments respectful of the existing township character and the surrounding landscape.

12.8. Policy

- Facilitate development in accordance with the town centre precincts.
- Encourage developments to respond to the town centre design guidelines when considering development applications in Main Street.

12.9. Actions

- Initiate an amendment to the Cardinia Planning Scheme to facilitate use and development in accordance with the specifications of the Town Centre Precincts.
- Initiate an amendment to the Cardinia Planning Scheme to introduce new planning controls which implement the town centre design guidelines.
- Revitalise Main Street through a streetscape renewal scheme including replacing the street furniture throughout Main Street and in JAC Russel Park.

13. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

13.1. Recent achievements

Since the beginning of the review process a number of things have been already implemented that were raised during the community consultation. It is not necessarily due to this strategy itself that these have been completed but it is thought important to acknowledge what has recently been achieved for Gembrook:

- Installation of the footpath along Main Street past the primary school.
- The return of the Gembrook Market
- The delivery of the Gembrook to Pakenham bus service.
- The sealing of the entry to Orchard Road.
- The community afternoon event.
- The renovation and extension of the Gembrook Community Centre
- The Mobile Youth Bus (MYBus) visits in Gembrook
- The upgrade to the mobile library
- Provision of a bore and power upgrade at the Gembrook Sports Ground
- Upgrading of the netball courts at Gembrook Sports Ground
- Mural with students at Gembrook Primary School (2010)
- The installation of a street light at the intersection of Boyd Rd and Gembrook Road, and the intersection of Mt Burnett Road and Gembrook Road.

13.2. Catalyst projects

As a minimum, the following Actions will be delivered in the twelve months following adoption of the Gembrook Township Strategy.

- Revitalise and provide for the ongoing maintenance of Gembrook Leisure Park
- Revitalise and provide for the ongoing maintenance of JAC Russel Park, including replacing the playground.
- Host a skate/BMX/scooter event at the Gembrook Skate Park once repairs have been made.
- Provide “way finding” signage to encourage visitors to explore the town.
- In partnership with the community, prepare a specific “welcome to Gembrook” information sheet for distribution to new residents in the community.
- Work with the community to organise a marketing and recruitment of volunteers workshop in Gembrook.
- Provide a walking/bike path along the Puffing Billy route connecting the town centre to the Gembrook Sports Ground
- Install a pram crossing on either side of Main Street on the west side of the intersection with Gembrook-Launching Place Rd, Gembrook-Pakenham Rd and Beenak East Rd
- Provide information for the Gembrook Times to remind existing residents of what vegetation species are indigenous to the area and the benefits of residents planting them in their garden.
- Construct a path and provide directional signage from the car park around to the western end of the picnic area and from the picnic area to the toilet facilities in Gembrook Park.

- Provide business training opportunities to enhance the management and marketing skills of tourist operators.
- Support networking opportunities for local businesses to engage with each other to learn and support each other.
- Develop and implement an interest based program (over a school term) for young people in Gembrook.
- Install a new brochure box in Gembrook Park
- Install a hand rail at the northern end of the footpath that runs between Le Soef Rd and Innes Rd

13.3. Short term actions – 1-5 years

The following actions are those which will be delivered within the next five years. This table will be reviewed every year and function on a rolling five year cycle so that it will always be looking at the next five years from any given date. Therefore actions that began in the medium to long term section will be moved into this table as their feasible delivery timeframe comes to being within the following five years.

<i>Ref No.</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Delivery timeframe</i>	<i>Responsible Department</i>
1	Investigate supported housing options for older persons and people with disabilities.	3 years	Strategic Planning
2	Prepare new planning controls which implement the desired future character guidelines.	3 years	Strategic Planning
3	Amend the Cardinia Planning Scheme to facilitate development in accordance with the Gembrook Township Framework Plan.	3 years	Strategic Planning
4	Further investigate the areas identified on the Gembrook Township Framework Plan for residential development.	2 years	Strategic Planning
5	Investigate rezoning land around the intersection of Belgrave-Gembrook Road, Ure Road and Station Street for light industrial purposes as identified in the Gembrook Township Framework Plan.	2 years	Strategic Planning
6	In partnership with the Emerald Tourist Railway Board and the Gembrook Community, support the preparation of a launch event for the commencement of additional Puffing Billy services from Gembrook.	1 year, subject to Puffing Billy's delivery timeframe	Community Strengthening
7	Seek VicRoads support for the erecting of banner poles at the entry points to Gembrook on Belgrave-Gembrook Road and Gembrook Road.	1 year	Engineering Services
8	In consultation with the community, provide a gateway treatment at the northern, southern and western entries to Gembrook.	4 years	Engineering Services and Strategic Planning
9	In partnership with the community prepare a tourism strategy for the hills region.	2 years	Economic Development

10	In partnership with the community, implement a number of neighbourhood development initiatives designed to promote community connection, community leadership and community spirit in Gembrook	3 years	Community Strengthening
11	Seek State Government funding to host an event for young people aged 13 years and over at the Gembrook Community Centre.	2 years	Youth Services
12	Finalise the route the Emerald to Gembrook Regional Trail will take and to prepare detailed plans for funding considerations	3 years	Recreation
13	Commence delivery of the priority footpaths as identified in the Gembrook Township Strategy.	2 Years	Engineering Services
14	Install a pram crossing and a connecting path across the nature strip opposite the exit to the Gembrook Community Centre.	3 years	Engineering services
15	Investigate the impacts of stormwater runoff in Gembrook:: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ develop appropriate measures to manage existing issues and ○ plan for reducing the impact of future development on the entire drainage catchment. 	2 years	Assets and Development
16	Undertake a review of roadside vegetation in Gembrook which assesses the need for tactical fuel breaks as well as the value of the vegetation as a biolink as part of the review of Council's Roadside Management Plan.	2 years	Open Space
17	Implement the treatments set out for the seven priority areas in Gembrook as outlined in the Municipal Wildfire Preparedness Plan (2005), or any future updated policy, including fire management plans for bushland reserves, fire breaks, buffer zones, water points and community fire programs.	Annually	Sustainable Environment
18	Introduce a heritage overlay to protect the Gembrook Commercial precinct in Main Street in the Cardinia Planning Scheme.	1 year	Strategic Planning
19	Introduce a heritage overlay to protect "Wattle Bank" at 18 Innes Road in the Cardinia Planning Scheme.	1 year	Strategic Planning
20	Introduce relevant controls into the Cardinia Planning Scheme for the Main Street heritage precinct which incorporate the conservation guidelines from the Cardinia Local Heritage Study Review.	2 years	Strategic Planning
21	Introduce a heritage overlay which protects the trees identified as significant in the Cardinia Shire Council Significant Tree Study (May 2009).	1 year	Strategic Planning
22	Develop a maintenance program for the Avenue of Honour trees.	1 year	Open Space

23	Initiate an amendment to the Cardinia Planning Scheme to facilitate use and development in accordance with the specifications of the Town Centre Precincts.	2 years	Strategic Planning
24	Initiate an amendment to the Cardinia Planning Scheme to introduce new planning controls which implement the town centre design guidelines	2 years	Strategic Planning
25	Revitalise Main Street through a streetscape renewal scheme including replacing the street furniture throughout Main Street and in JAC Russel Park.	3 years	Operations, engineering services
26	Investigate the need and opportunity to provide a path from town to Gilwell Park and Kurth Kiln Regional Park along Gembrook-Launching Place Road.	3 years	Recreation

13.4. Medium to long term actions

The following actions require more preparation time or significant resources to implement which are beyond the scope of delivery in the next five years. These actions will be reviewed on an annual basis and added to a rolling five year implementation plan as appropriate.

- Secure the long term use of JAC Russel Park for open space purposes.
- Complete the Emerald to Gembrook Regional Trail.
- Install two additional netball courts at the Gembrook Sports Ground.
- Provide a path which connects JAC Russel Park, Main Street, Gembrook Leisure Park and Gembrook Park.
- Seal Orchard Road up to the main gate of the Gembrook Sports Ground.
- Under ground the power lines through Main Street.
- Advocate to VicRoads to construct a roundabout at the intersection of Main Street, Gembrook Road and Gembrook-Launching Place Road and Beenak East Road
- Install bollards in Gembrook Community Centre car park.

13.5. Review process

This is the first full review that has been undertaken since the preparation and adoption of the Gembrook Township Strategy in 1998. This review has given an opportunity to Council to update the strategy in light of new and emerging issues. The content of this strategy has been informed by the feedback received during the community consultation process. To ensure that the strategy is relevant in light of any changes in the assumptions for development, it is recommended that Council undertake a full review of the strategy be undertaken in 5 years.

In addition to the 5 year full review, at the end of each financial year before then, an annual report will be provided to both the Gembrook Township Committee and local media which will provide an update on the implementation of the Gembrook Township Strategy over the previous twelve months. There will also be a review of the implementation timeframes and an update provided regarding any changes to the rolling five year implementation plan.

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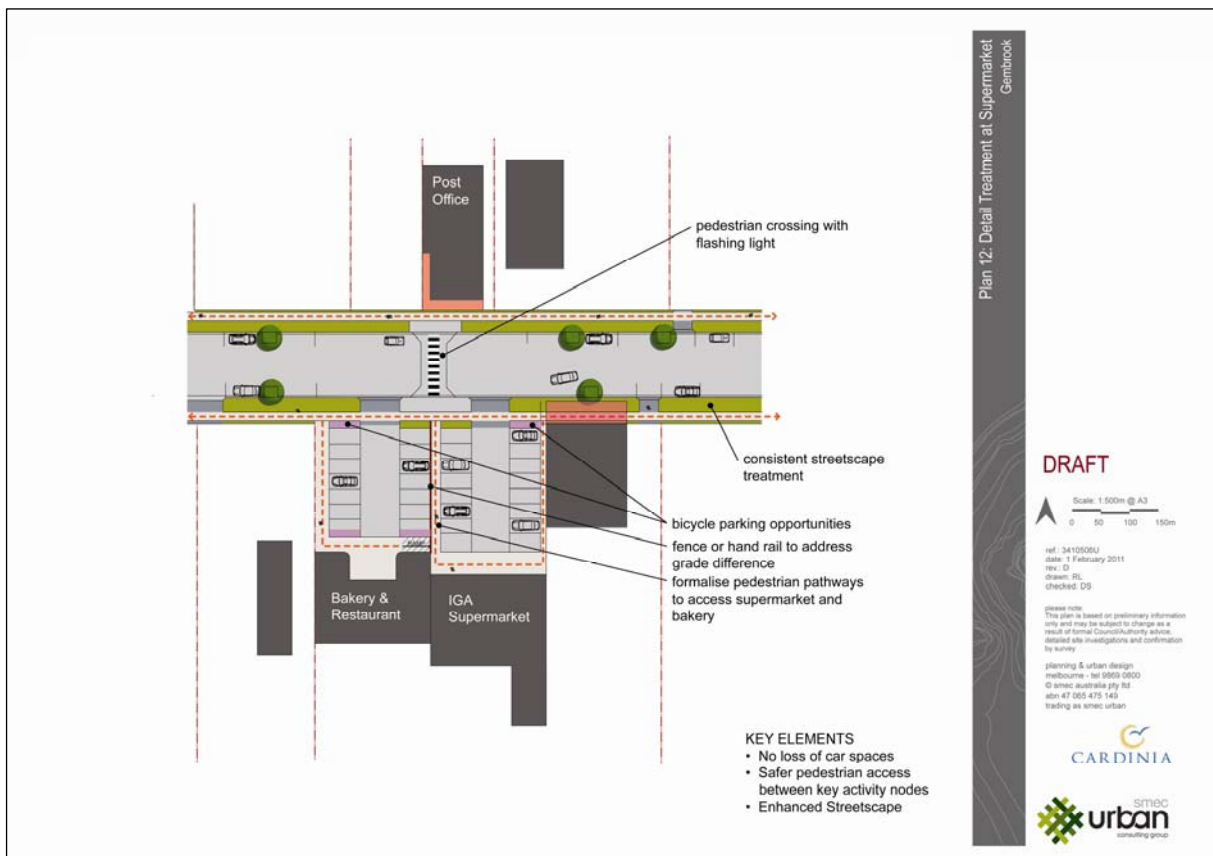
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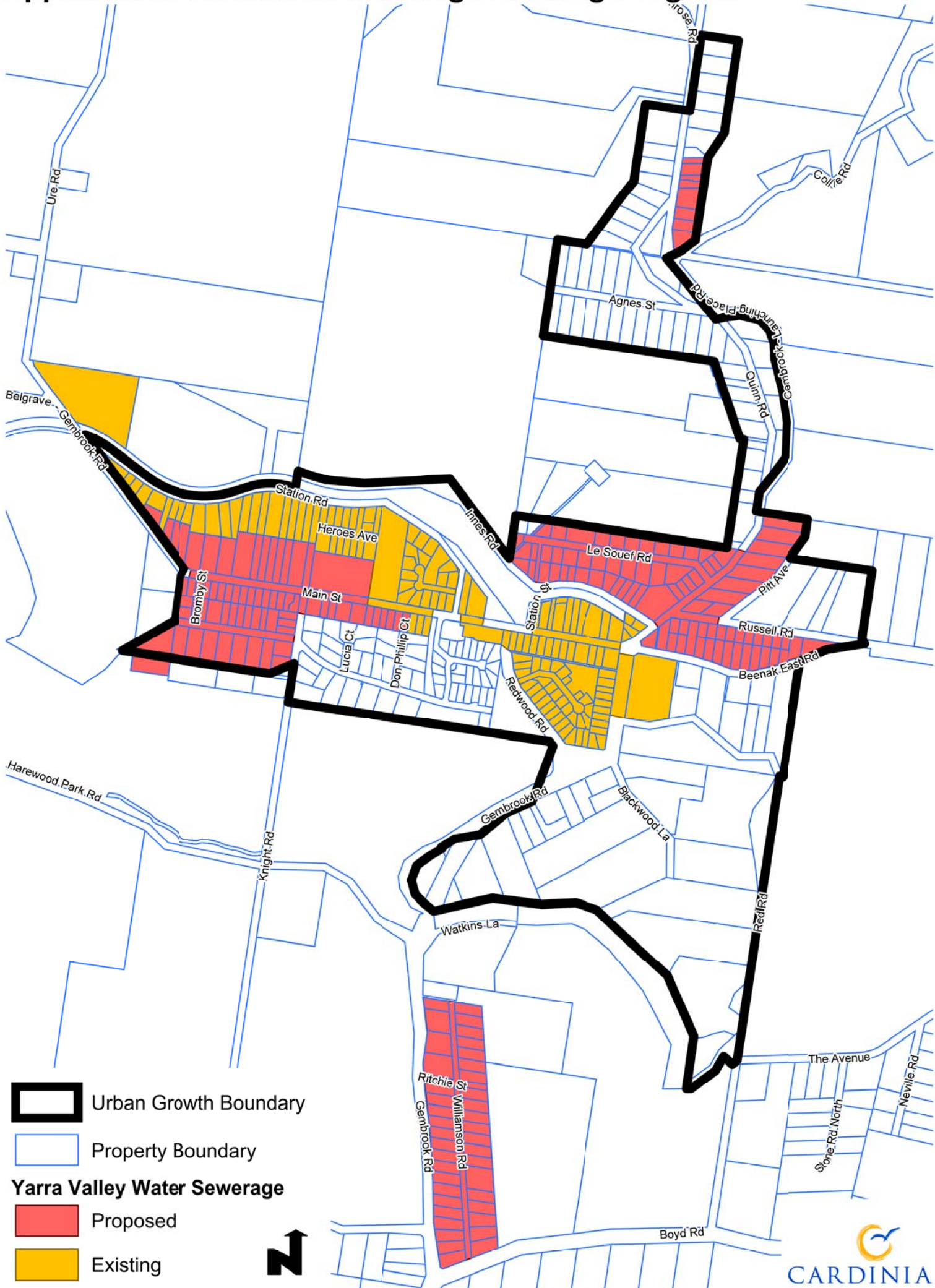
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15. APPENDICES

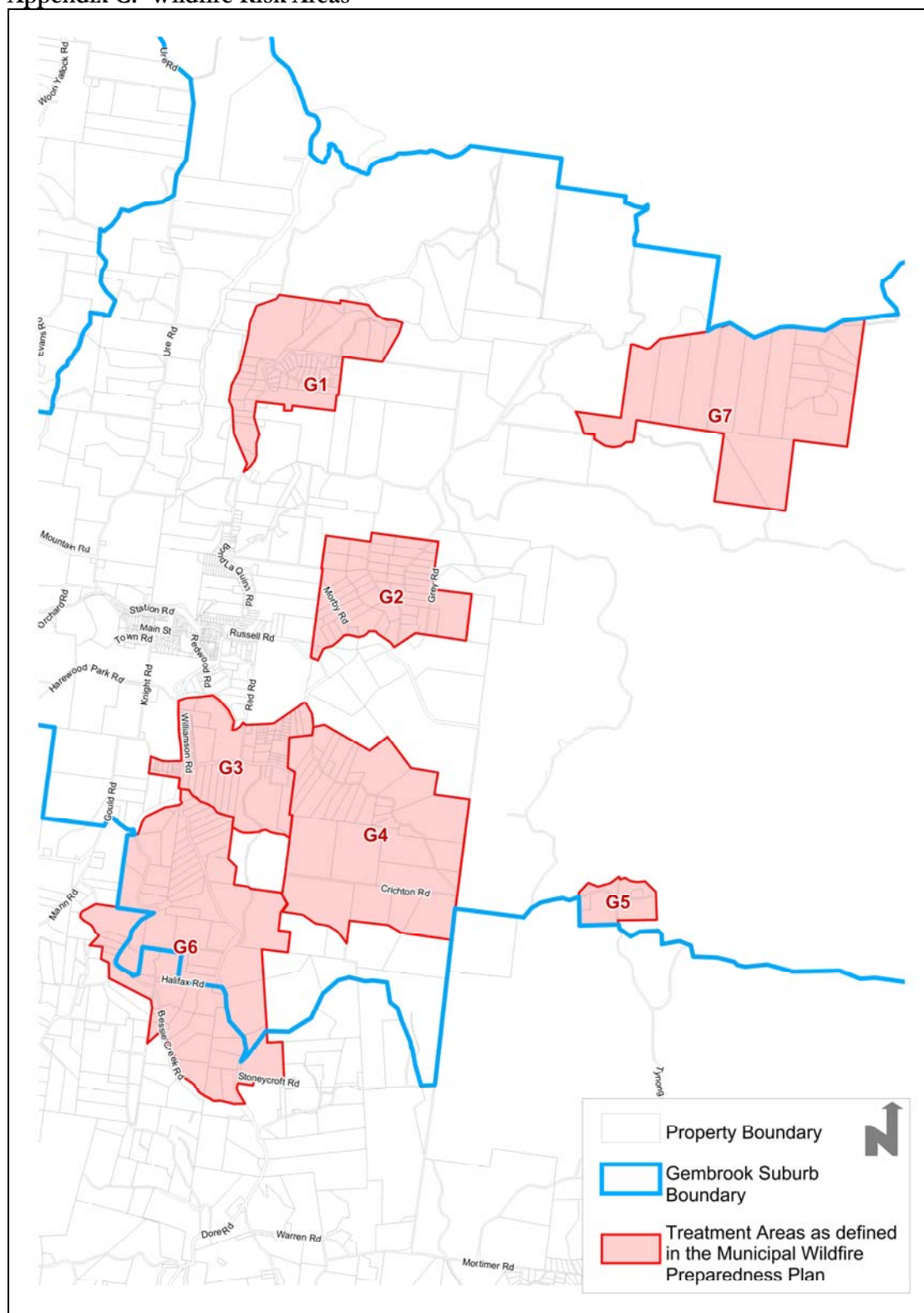
Appendix A: Proposed Streetscape Treatment for Main Street



Appendix B: Gembrook Sewerage Backlog Program



Appendix C: Wildfire Risk Areas

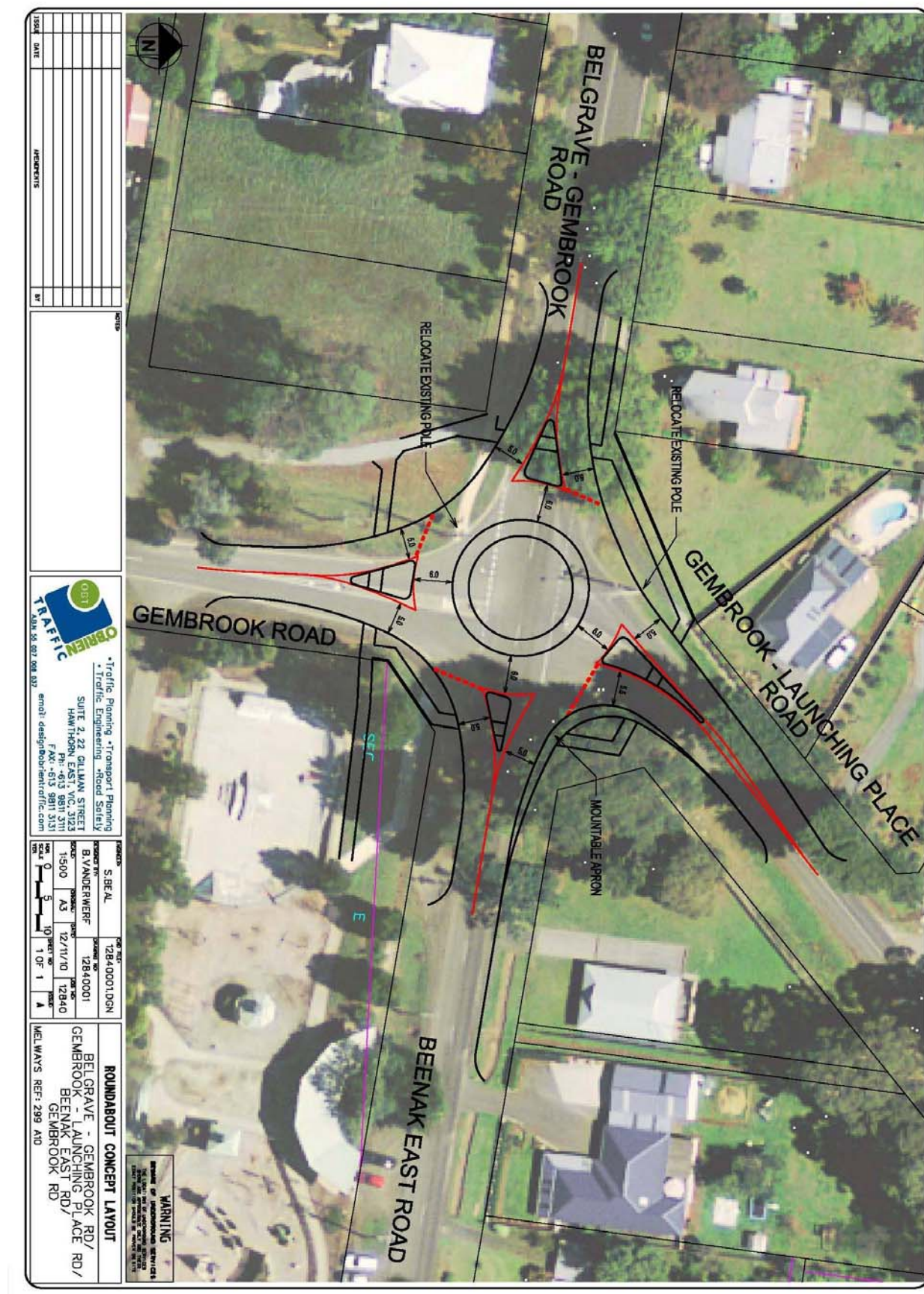


Appendix C Continued: Wildfire Risk Areas

Fire Risk Area	Risk Rating	Existing Treatments to be continued/Enhanced	Other Treatments
G1-Gilwell park	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DSE maintains a Fire Protection Plan for Kurth Kiln Regional Park. A Community Fireguard group exists in Warwick Rd An Emergency Management Plan exists for Gilwell Park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Fuelbreak along Gembrook-Launching Place Rd. Buffer zone to be established on southern edge of Gilwell Park. Scout association to be encouraged to develop a Fire Management Plan. Consider establishment of a Designated Water Point in Warwick Rd. Consider establishment of a fuel reduced fuelbreak in grassed valley on private land to the west.
G2-Livio Drive	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Fireguard group exists in Livio Drive/ Beenak East Road. Bushfire blitz was conducted in Livio Drive, Grey Road and Morbey Road in 2002/03 and Fire Ready Victoria was conducted in 2004/05 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tactical firebreak along Beenak East Road from Gembrook to Livio Drive. Scout Association to be encouraged to develop a Fire Management Plan for land at west end of Livio Drive. Establishment of a Designated Water Point in the area to be considered.
G3-The Avenue/Boyd Road	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bushfire Blitz was conducted in Stone Road North/Neville Road in 2002/03. Fire Ready Victoria conducted in Williamsons Road/Boyd Road in 2003/04. Mains water available in Williamson road area. Slashed Buffer Zone along western edge of Gembrook Park. Gembrook park is patrolled by Council staff on Total fire ban (TFB) days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tactical Firebreaks along Boyd Road and The Avenue. Strategic Fuelbreak along Gembrook Road. Weed reduction/blackberry removal to reduce elevated fuel hazard on council land at the northwest corner of Watkins lane. Property owner at end of Stone Road north should be approached to request designation as Water point. CFA to target the area for a potential Community Fireguard program.
G4-Tonimbuk Road	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Ready Victoria conducted at cnr Gembrook/Tonimbuk Road and Crichton Road in 2003/04. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider establishment of a Designated Water Point, possibly in Crichton Road. Tactical Firebreak along Gembrook-Tonimbuk Road. CFA to target the area for Community Fireguard.
G5-Tynong Road	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DSE maintains a Fire Protection Plan for bunyip State Park and has zoned the surrounding area as FMZ 3. Areas to the south and east were burnt in 1999 and 2002. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tactical Firebreaks along Gembrook-Tonimbuk Road and Tynong North Road. CFA to target area for potential Community Fireguard program.

Fire Risk Area	Risk Rating	Existing Treatments to be continued/Enhanced	Other Treatments
G6-Bessie Creek road	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire access track from Halifax Road to Mt Eirene Road. • Bushfire Blitz was conducted in 2002/03. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mt Eirene Road to be slashed 3m either side as a buffer zone.
G7-Currawong Drive	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSE maintains a Fire Protection Plan for Bunyip State Park and has zoned the surrounding area FMZ 3. An area to the north was burnt in 2000. • A CSC Fire Management Plan exists for Currawong Drive Reserve. • An inactive Community Fireguard group exists in Currawong Drive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property owner in Currawong Drive should be approached to request designation of the dam as a water point.

Appendix D: Roundabout Concept Plan



Appendix E: Pedestrian Counts

