

21.02 THE CITY TODAY

28/08/2008
C50

21.02-1 The City Profile

28/08/2008
C50

The City of Moonee Valley was created in December 1994, following a major review of local government boundaries in Victoria. The restructure brought together a rich mix of communities from the inner city suburbs of North Melbourne, Flemington and Kensington through to Airport West and Avondale Heights in Melbourne's outer north west. Comprising parts of what were Melbourne and Keilor, as well as the former City of Essendon, the City of Moonee Valley covers an area of approximately 44 square kilometres.

Moonee Valley is dominated by residential land uses, but is well serviced by many community level shopping centres and several industrial precincts. The City is well located, in close proximity to the Central Business District, International Airport, the ports and the Docklands. The City is also well serviced by major roads, including the Tullamarine and Calder Freeways, the Western By-Pass and CityLink, making Moonee Valley very accessible to the rest of Melbourne, Victoria and interstate markets.

Our Residents

Home to an estimated resident population of almost 110,300 people, Moonee Valley reflects the diversity of metropolitan Melbourne (ABS 2003 Regional Population Growth, cat.no.3218.0). The City has a slightly higher proportion of older people over 60 years and a lower proportion of young people and children when compared to metropolitan Melbourne. In the City of Moonee Valley, 18.7% of residents are aged 60 years or more, compared to Melbourne which has 16.0% residents aged 60 years or more (ABS 2002 *Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile*, cat. no. 2001.0).

Almost 28% of the City of Moonee Valley's residents were born overseas compared to 34% for the Melbourne Statistical District including a significant number from a non-English speaking background. Reflecting this diversity, Moonee Valley is home to an exciting variety of lifestyles, cultures and languages. Major countries of origin include: Italy (6.2%), the United Kingdom (2.6%), Greece (1.7%), Vietnam (2.2%), and China (1.1%) (ABS 2002 *Census Basic Community Profile*, cat. no. 2001.0).

This diverse range of household structures throughout the City is not, however, complemented by a diverse housing stock. Information from the 2001 Census shows that there are 42 000 occupied private dwellings in the City of Moonee Valley and separate houses account for 67.5% of the City's housing stock. An additional 31% of dwellings are multi-unit dwellings comprising units, apartments and townhouses. Although this proportion of multi-unit housing is a higher proportion than the metropolitan average of almost 25%, it is consistent with similar inner and middle ring municipalities. It reflects the fact that the proportion of multi-unit housing is significantly boosted by several large public housing estates within the City that account for approximately 9% of dwellings in the City (ABS 2002 *Census Basic Community Profile*, cat. no. 2001.0).

The current average size of households in the City of Moonee Valley is estimated to be 2.5 people compared to 2.6 for the metropolitan Melbourne Statistical Division. It is projected that over the next 2 decades, with the continuing growth in the number of households in the City, the size of households in the City of Moonee Valley will continue to fall to an average size of 2.3 persons per household by 2021 (Department of Infrastructure 2000 *Victoria in Future*).

Population Trends

The City's population has grown at an incremental rate over the past two decades and the projected outlook for the next two decades is for further modest growth. Based on estimates

prepared prior to the last census (in 2001), the projected outlook for the City is that its population will grow to a total population of 115 155 people by 2021. This follows a trend of pattern of stable population growth occurring across the middle-suburbs of Melbourne (ABS 2002 *Census Basic Community Profile*, cat. no. 2001.0).

While growth has been minimal, significant change is occurring to the structure of the City's population. Since 1991, there has been an overall trend of an increase in the proportion of residents aged more than 30 years or more and a decline in the number of children, young people and adults aged 20 to 29 years old. The most notable trend is the increase in the proportion of residents aged 40 to 59 years of age from 23% in 1991 to 26% of residents in 2001. This reflects the aging of residents born between 1942 and 1961 during the population growth period following the Second World War known as the "baby boom" (ABS 2002 *Census Basic Community Profile*, cat. no. 2001.0).

There has also been growth in the number and proportion of residents aged 60 years or more, especially residents aged 75 years or more who have increased from 5.0% of residents in 1991 to 6.6% in 2001 generating demand for locally available aged accommodation and services. Meanwhile the number and proportion of infants aged 0-4 years old has fallen from 6.4% since 1991 to 5.9% in 2001 while the number of children aged 5 to 9 years old has increased from 5.6% in 1991 to 5.9% in 2001 (ABS 2002 *Census Basic Community Profile*, cat. no. 2001.0).

It is projected that the proportion of children and residents aged in the 20-30 years of age group will continue to decline while the proportion of the population aged between 45-60 years will grow substantially as the "baby boomers" age. Across Melbourne, this shift in the age structure of the City's population has been attributed to declining fertility rates, increases in life expectancy and relatively low levels of migration at a municipal level. Among other implications, it signals a likely shift in needs for services and housing (Department of Infrastructure 2000 *Victoria in Future*).

Our Workforce

The City has a resident workforce of 52 000 people comprising a wide mix of professional, semi-skilled and unskilled labour. About one-third of Moonee Valley residents are employed in "white collar" occupations (managers, administrators, professionals and para-professionals); one-third work in clerical, sales and personal service occupations; and one-third work as tradespeople, plant and machine operators, drivers, labourers and in other related occupations. The proportion of the workforce in managerial and professional occupations is relatively high for the western region (ABS 2002 *Census Basic Community Profile*, cat. no. 2001.0).

The City provides approximately 30,000 jobs, mainly in retailing, community services and manufacturing. Major employment sectors are recreation, personal services, finance, property and business services. Approximately one in four people live and work in this City; three-quarters of the resident workforce travel to other parts of metropolitan Melbourne to work (mainly to the Central Business area and other inner suburbs).

The City has three significant industrial areas: Airport West, Kensington/Flemington and North Melbourne. It also has a strong commercial and business base with numerous community level shopping centres providing a mix of retail, business and entertainment facilities. In particular, the Moonee Ponds Business District Centre is recognised as the leading centre for retail, business, financial and personal services in Melbourne's northwest.

Moonee Valley contains many major employers including the Australian Taxation Office; Foxtel; ICI; the Moonee Valley Racecourse; Essendon Football Club; the Australian Catholic University and Kangan Institute of TAFE. Most businesses in the City are, however, small, with approximately 66% employing less than five people (ABS 1998 *Business Register*, cat. no. 8131.0).

21.02-219/01/2006
VC37**Strengths of Moonee Valley****Location**

Moonee Valley is well positioned to remain the primary business centre in Melbourne's northwest region. Adjacent to several of Melbourne's major roads (Tullamarine and Calder freeways, the Western Ring Road and CityLink), businesses in this City are only minutes away from central Melbourne and the industrial heartland to the north and west of Melbourne. Moonee Valley is also readily accessible to Melbourne International Airport, the Docklands, the National Rail Freight Centre and Melbourne ports.

Environment

Moonee Valley is bounded by two waterways (the Maribyrnong River and Moonee Ponds Creek) and offers an abundance of both structured and unstructured recreational opportunities. These waterways and Steele Creek can continue to be upgraded to become significant linear parks through the City.

Moonee Valley also has remnant native vegetation at Napier Park, Strathnaver Reserve, Afton Street and along the City's waterways. Queen's Park, adjacent to Moonee Ponds Business District Centre, is one of Melbourne's premier Botanical Gardens.

Housing

Moonee Valley's heritage is evident in its streetscapes, housing and shopping centres. Examples are to be found of all periods of Melbourne's housing, including Victorian, Edwardian, Federation and Californian Bungalow architecture in the south through to the more Modernist and Contemporary styles in the western part of the City.

The City's shopping strips also provide varying examples of architecture from different eras, ranging from the older, more established centres such as Racecourse Road and Puckle Street (which are protected by conservation controls) to the more modern, stand-alone shopping centres.

The retention of these historically significant elements will enhance the attractiveness of the City as a place to live, work and visit and conserve our links with the past.

Retail

Moonee Valley has a wide range of regional shopping centres, including Moonee Ponds Activity Centre and Keilor Road, Niddrie that serve Melbourne's northwest region. Airport West Shopping Centre is another regional centre that serves the northern part of the City as well as the growth areas located in the Cities of Hume and Whittlesea. There are also many community and local centres that meet people's weekly and daily needs and make a significant contribution to the life of the City.

Recreation

The City's existing community facilities and publicly owned land holdings, together with cultural and social events such as local festivals, are greatly valued by the local community. The City hosts the Moonee Valley Festival, an annual event which consistently attracts crowds in the order of 100,000 over three days. Many of the community level shopping centres also hold their own festivals to promote community life in their local area.

Maribyrnong Park, Fairbairn Park, Debney Park, Buckley Park, Aberfeldie Park and Clifton Park are only some of the parks within the City that provide quality areas for sporting pursuits and other forms of structured recreation.

Other major regional attractions include the Essendon Football Club and Moonee Valley Racecourse. Just outside the City of Moonee Valley are the Royal Agricultural Society Showgrounds and Flemington Racecourse. These facilities draw thousands of people into the City and create numerous opportunities for local businesses.

Education

Moonee Valley residents have access to a range of outstanding public and private schools. The City also provides a number of adult education and training facilities including the Kangan Institute and Australian Catholic University. A number of other tertiary institutions are located close to the City and are within easy reach.

21.02-3

19/01/2006
VC37

Opportunities to Improve the City

Key Sites

The City of Moonee Valley has several major sites that are likely to be wholly or partly redeveloped over the next 15 years.

The future of Niddrie Quarry has been uncertain for at least 20 years. Redevelopment should include a linear park along Steele Creek, the creation of substantial new recreational facilities utilising the beauty of the quarry hole and provision of housing that provides a diversity of allotments and dwellings.

The future of Essendon Airport is also uncertain. If Essendon Airport is to be closed, the site should be redeveloped for a range of uses that capitalise on the strategic location of the site by providing a range of business and employment opportunities in a quality environment. This should include high quality industrial parks, hotel with convention facilities and a major cultural/entertainment facility located adjacent to the Tullamarine Freeway on the western part of the airport. The balance of the site should be redeveloped to provide a diversity of housing types and sizes. The whole redevelopment of Essendon Airport should however be integrated and contribute to the life of the City. Non-aviation uses that are developed while the airport continues to operate should be located on the western side of the airport and be consistent with the long term vision of the site.

Other key sites include land adjacent to Essendon and Newmarket railway stations and land formerly owned by Melbourne Water adjacent to the Maribyrnong River (Canning Street). These sites can be partly or wholly redeveloped for housing which could make a significant contribution to sustaining the City's population and providing greater housing choice within the City.

Some of the City's industrial areas also contain older buildings that are likely to be redeveloped.

Housing

Moonee Valley contains many examples of quality housing in attractive, tree lined streets. Council has a strong leadership role to play in the housing field and the preparation of local character guidelines will protect the amenity and character of local areas. A unified, City-wide approach to conserving existing housing stock and carefully managing quality infill development will retain the character of local neighbourhoods, enhance the quality of the City's streetscapes and provide a greater diversity of housing choices for the community.

The City has a significant stock of vacant residential lots, particularly in the Niddrie/Avondale Heights area, some of which should be used for multi unit housing. There are also opportunities for older houses on large blocks of land to be redeveloped for two or three townhouses. In such instances, Council will however encourage the retention of period homes with the new dwellings constructed behind the existing dwelling. This will maintain the streetscape integrity and soften the impact of new development.

The public housing estates in Ascot Vale, Flemington and North Melbourne must be maintained, albeit refurbished over the next 15 years, and there will be opportunities to improve the amenity and facilities of these estates.

Providing housing designed for people with special needs will also be a high priority, particularly accommodation for the aged. Moonee Valley's has an ageing population, many of who can no longer easily look after a home and many who do not have family nearby to help.

Economic Development

As competition from other regional centres increases, Moonee Valley's strip shopping centres must improve their convenience, accessibility, appearance and promotion to ensure their continued success. Several of the City's strip shopping centres have an "old world" charm that can be used to create a unique shopping experience. Council will support trader groups to work co-operatively to achieve an integrated direction and prosperous future for the centres.

The City has great potential as a tourist destination. With excellent road and public transport access, there is much to offer visitors. By making use of existing venues such as the historic Queen's Park Caretaker's Cottage, Windy Hill and Moonee Valley Racecourse, by creating new facilities such as a tea garden in Canning Street and by offering a greater range of retail and entertainment facilities (particularly in the large retail centres of Moonee Ponds, Niddrie and Airport West), Moonee Valley will be better able to capitalise on recreational and tourism opportunities.

The age and condition of the City's industrial stock makes reinvestment an attractive option - one that Council needs to facilitate. Redevelopment will attract new organisations to Moonee Valley, creating new jobs and capturing additional expenditure for local shopping centres and established businesses in the City. There are opportunities to strengthen the Airport West industrial area through improvements to carparking, marketing and design of local streets.

The restructuring of workplaces, more flexible work arrangements and the technological capacity of personal computers, faxes and telecommunications networks will continue to allow an increasing number of people to work from home. This offers opportunities to create 'urban villages' where people live and work in their local community, thereby strengthening the community and reducing car usage.

21.02-4
19/01/2006
VC37

Barriers to Building a Better Community

The City's Asset Base

Many of Council's building assets have been neglected and require immediate attention. This has already been addressed through a recently completed Building Assets Condition Study that identified the municipality's ageing infrastructure as requiring a high financial contribution to meet maintenance demands.

Unfortunately, the City does not have substantial financial reserves and the continued limits on municipal rates will ensure that the renewal of the City's asset base will require careful long term planning and management.

The periodic flooding of the City's waterways, particularly the Maribyrnong River, will require the development of more effective flood mitigation and management measures and capital expenditure.

Community Identity

Barriers created by freeways, railway lines and the Maribyrnong River can lead local communities to feel isolated from the rest of the municipality and neighbouring cities. High priority needs to be given to creating a City that brings people together and developing a focus for each of the City's communities, where groups can mix together and express their culture and creative spirit.

The changing nature of the City's population may also require an increase in the provision of aged accommodation and crisis accommodation. Similarly, Council can encourage the multi-purpose use of buildings to satisfy a range of needs and groups within the one facility, for example, providing aged and children's services within the one facility. This would heighten the usefulness of the buildings, enhance social interaction and community life and allow community buildings to become a focus for community life.

Transport

A lack of good public transport services in some parts of Moonee Valley - particularly the western part of the City - impacts on residents' access to recreational and employment opportunities, particularly for youth. As such, mobility within the City and access to other places, such as shopping centres and employment, is a key issue.

The development of CityLink along the City's boundary offers major benefits in terms of accessibility to other parts of Melbourne. Council and the CityLink Authority have a shared commitment to minimising any increase in traffic, congestion or noise within the surrounding residential streets.

Council is also committed to encouraging cycling, both as a recreational pursuit and as an alternative form of transport. Council is developing off-road bicycle routes as well as designated on-road networks.

Jobs

Secure employment opportunities are the most effective means of creating a prosperous community. Unfortunately, the City's employment opportunities are hampered by a small and ageing industrial base and an unemployment rate consistently above metropolitan averages.

Council therefore must nurture an enterprising business culture that embraces world's best practice and ensure that a range of business information, financial and other support services are available to assist business development.

It is expected that new jobs will be mainly generated in high value adding manufacturing and technological industries, for example, computer software and business services. Jobs will also be created in personal services such as food and entertainment, financial services, recreation and tourism, education, retailing and home and community care.

The Council and the wider community must also begin to actively participate in regional marketing and advertising campaigns to better promote the City and its local businesses.