

21.15 COMMERCIAL CENTRES

21.15-1 Introductory Statement

The City of Ballarat Central Business Area is the major hub for the Ballarat region's retail and commercial activities and as such offers services to an estimated regional population of some 144,000 people, and an even wider trading area of 180,000 people. The municipality also has many sub-regional, neighbourhood and local convenience centres which meet the everyday needs of their local communities, and create a balance with the larger Ballarat Central Business Area. Commercial centres generate wealth, and employment for the whole of the municipality, and play a major role in the economic growth, vibrancy and atmosphere of the City.

Based on 2003 figures on existing commercial floorspace and population forecasts, it is estimated that the Ballarat region could accommodate an additional 8,000m² of food retailing floorspace and 60,000m² of non-food retailing and retail service floorspace for the period to 2016.

The City of Ballarat has adopted a hierarchical approach to the location of commercial floorspace with the hierarchy consisting of:

Regional shopping centre: provides for the regional shopping needs of residents in a wide catchment; is supported by department store and discount department store provision; also has a strong role in the provision of a wider range of non-retail functions including entertainment, office, civic and community, and potential for residential development.

Sub-regional shopping centre: is the location for shopping facilities which serve a subregional market; usually supported by discount department store and supermarket facilities; can have some non-retail functions such as a limited range of office, medical, community activities, etc.

Primary neighbourhood centre: provides weekly grocery shopping facilities based around a supermarket tenant; in some cases has a small specialty retail or non-retail component (small office, medical, etc).

Other neighbourhood centre or township centre: provides smaller range of shopping, usually only with a small supermarket tenant, and with a main role in providing for the daily or top-up shopping.

Local convenience centre: serves a local walk-in catchment, and typically providing for the daily convenience needs of local residents or passing motorists. Ballarat is served by a network of small local centres that provide for the walk-in daily shopping requirements of local communities. These centres are in a range of forms, from single milkbars to collections of 4-5 shops or more, often supported by a general store or mini-mart. In some cases the role of local convenience centre is undertaken by 24 hour convenience stores or shops associated with petrol filling stations.

Bulky goods: represent major homemaker and other bulky goods store types; can seek locations away from established centres, but should be directed to preferred nominated locations in order to generate co-location benefits; have particular site requirements in terms of exposure and access to a large catchment; the category also includes some building supplies and trade supplies stores that serve a non-retail trade customer base.

The City of Ballarat's approach to commercial floorspace seeks to place new floorspace within the appropriate centre within the hierarchy. With changing shopping patterns many of the goods and services once found in the local convenience centre are struggling to survive. As these businesses close new business is seeking to take advantage of the lower rental costs available in the local convenience centre. Rather than see the premises vacated by milkbars and similar uses become rundown the City of Ballarat is taking a flexible stance on the type of business it is encouraging in local convenience centres and will not discourage non-convenience goods and services from establishing. The Council will however not provide for the expansion of local convenience centres where any premises is being used for the provision of non-convenience goods and services.

Retail uses in the Sebastopol North Neighbourhood Centre are to be diversified to include a greater range of non-food shopping and as an alternative location for bulky goods (mainly in

building / trade supplies) and additional land to be made available for commercial development by including all of the land bounded by Albert Street, Rubicon Street, Yarrowee Street and Bala Street, within the Business 1 Zone together with all properties fronting the western side of Albert Street between Rubicon and Hertford Streets.

21.15-1.1 Central Business Area

The enhancement and facilitation of the functions of the Central Business Area is highlighted by the Ballarat Central Business Area Strategy and Ballarat Retail Development Strategy. The city centre will continue to be the dominant activity centre and tourists will be encouraged to prolong their stay and to visit the cities first rate cultural, recreational and entertainment facilities. Apart from encouraging tourists to stay longer, the Ballarat Central Business Area needs to be reinvigorated for the benefit of the Ballarat community. Developing strategies to manage future retail and office development, and to examine opportunities for the utilisation of upper level floor space for residential purposes and refurbished office space is a way of enhancing the centre. The better use of the upper level floor space within the city centre will be promoted. Development of these areas will be a priority and was highlighted in the Ballarat Central Business Area Strategy.

The relocation of the police and law courts from Camp Street into a new facility has created a unique opportunity to regenerate the heart of the Ballarat Central Business Area. The future of this area is expressed in the following statement which has been adopted as the vision for Camp Street:

“The Camp Street Precinct will become the vibrant focus of community life, arts and culture in the heart of the Ballarat Central Business Area.

Through the combined energy and resources of the municipality and state and federal governments – with the strong support and involvement of the community, business and education – the precinct will provide a major new stimulus to the economic and cultural life of the City.

Relocation of the Visual and Performing Arts components of the University of Ballarat’s School of Arts to the precinct and the expansion of the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery into the Old Police Station will bring an organic, creative presence and vivacity that will energise the existing and planned cultural and entertainment resources in the area.

The Camp Street Precinct will enrich the life of the community and establish a significant new beacon to draw visitors and events to Ballarat.”

The early activity in Camp Street is focused on the relocation of the University of Ballarat’s School of Arts into the precinct and the expansion of the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery into the Old Police Station. The full realisation of the vision will be dependent on achieving a land use mix on private land within the precinct which complements the arts/education uses which are being established on the western side of the street. Equally important is that new development occurs in a form which respects the historic significance of the precinct, protects important views and vistas and enhances existing and creates new pedestrian links with adjoining areas.

21.15-1.2 Other commercial areas

The importance of the sub-regional, neighbourhood and convenience centres is recognised and development within these designated centres will be encouraged, to improve overall service to local communities. This development will take the form of consolidation of the existing functions, rather than intensive expansion.

The central business district sits at the top of the hierarchy as the primary centre for retail, commerce and entertainment serving the western region. Other centres fall into the hierarchy in the following way:

Centre	Role
Stockland Wendouree (formerly Wendouree Village)	Sub-regional
Sebastopol North	Neighbourhood
Sebastopol	Neighbourhood
Howitt Street	Neighbourhood
Ballarat Marketplace (formerly Creswick Plaza)	Neighbourhood
Midvale Shopping Centre	Neighbourhood
Northway Shopping Centre	Neighbourhood
Buninyong Town Centre	Neighbourhood
Pleasant Park	Neighbourhood
Sturt St (between Lyons & Pleasant Streets)	Local Convenience Centre
Miners Rest	Local Convenience Centre
Learmonth	Local Convenience Centre
Cnr Sturt and Gillies Streets, Alfredton	Local Convenience Centre
Cuthberts Road, Alfredton	Local Convenience Centre
Sturt Street, Alfredton	Local Convenience Centre
Violet Ave, Wendouree West	Local Convenience Centre
Carpenter St, Wendouree	Local Convenience Centre
Harold St, Wendouree	Local Convenience Centre
Grandview Gve, Wendouree	Local Convenience Centre
College St, Wendouree	Local Convenience Centre
Cnr Macarthur and Doveton Streets, Ballarat	Local Convenience Centre
Cnr Landsborough and Lydiard Streets, Ballarat North	Local Convenience Centre
Cnr Walker and Simpson Streets, Ballarat North	Local Convenience Centre
Humffray Street, Brown Hill	Local Convenience Centre
Cnr Kline St & Wesley Crt, Ballarat East	Local Convenience Centre
Cnr Geelong Rd & Clayton St, Golden Point	Local Convenience Centre
Cnr Barkly and Grant Streets, Golden Point	Local Convenience Centre
Cnr Grant and Humffray Streets, Golden Point	Local Convenience Centre
Cnr Barkly and Cobden Streets, Mount Pleasant	Local Convenience Centre
Boak Ave, Mount Helen	Local Convenience Centre
Cnr Albert and Rubicon Streets, Sebastopol	Local Convenience Centre

21.15-1.3 Bulky Goods Retailing

An area where opportunity exists to attract new business and thereby create new jobs and reduce the amount of retail expenditure leaving Ballarat is peripheral retailing. Superstores offering bulky items such as furniture, whitegoods and floor coverings which have previously focused on the establishment of stores in Melbourne are increasingly looking to expand their markets within provincial centres. With floorspaces of up to 4,000m² and sometimes above, these stores cannot be accommodated within many of the existing centres, including the CBA. In 1999 the City of Ballarat established the Wendouree Peripheral Retailing Precinct and designated four other existing commercial centres as alternative preferred locations for the establishment of peripheral retailing. In 2003 there was approximately 58,000m² of bulky goods retail floorspace within the City of Ballarat and it is estimated that an additional 47,000m² of bulky goods floorspace could be accommodated until 2026. The creation of additional opportunities for bulky goods retailing in the future will concentrate on the expansion of the Wendouree Peripheral Retailing Centre to accommodate an additional 38,000m² of floor area by 2016 and the Sebastopol North to accommodate an additional 9,000m².

21.15-2 Issues

- Existing vacancy rates for groundfloor retail floorspace within commercial centres;
- Vacant upper floorspace within the Central Business Area;
- Loss of office uses from the Central Business Area;
- Maintaining the Central Business Area as the premier commercial centre within Western Victoria;
- Car parking levels within the Central Business Area.
- The establishment of bulky goods retailing within the City of Ballarat.
- Achieving a mix of land use within the Camp Street Precinct which is complementary to the concept of an Arts/Education precinct.
- Achieving forms of development within the Camp Street Precinct which maintain important views and vistas, maintain and enhance pedestrian links to adjoining areas and recognise the historic significance of the area.

21.15-3 Objectives

- To effectively manage future retail and office development in the City of Ballarat;
- To recognise, enhance and facilitate the function of the Ballarat Central Business Area (BCBA) as the dominant administrative, commercial, financial, cultural, recreational, tourist, and entertainment centre of the City and surrounding region;
- To encourage and facilitate the development of appropriate regional, sub-regional, neighbourhood and local convenience centres commensurate with their identified role to serve the needs of the existing and future population of the surrounding communities and complement the function of the BCBA.
- To encourage development within the designated activity centres in a manner that improves the overall amenity and environment of the centre.
- To provide for the establishment of bulky goods retailing within the City of Ballarat.
- To revitalise the heart of the Ballarat Central Business Area through the creation of an arts/education based precinct.

21.15-4 Strategies

- Increase the range of attractions and experiences offered to visitors;
- Develop proposals for the provision of additional car parking within the Central Business Area.
- Focus on the provision of good depth in the range of major national brand specialty stores (in fashion, lifestyle, homewares, etc) within the CBA.
- Continue to provide for major grocery shopping and other convenience purchases within the CBA recognising that it plays a role in these retail types.
- Recognise that the long term strengths of the CBA are in smaller specialty shops and showrooms and that big box bulky goods shopping should be accommodated away from the CBA.
- Take advantage of opportunities to revitalise the retail offer on Mair Street, in particular with the redevelopment of the Civic Hall as a hotel, and this may comprise the relocation of some service industry activities away from the CBA.
- Support the development of intensive housing such as apartments in close proximity to the CBA, subject to appropriate location and design.
- Allow Stockland Wendouree to continue to play an important role as a location for sub-regional shopping, and anchor this role through strong representation in supermarket and discount department store provision, and a limited range of specialty shops.
- Neighbourhood shopping centres will be the focus for convenience shopping facilities that are supported by the surrounding residential neighbourhood, as well as providing additional facilities such as some specialty shopping, small office business, service business, etc.
- Supports the development of new supermarket-based shopping centres to serve area where there substantial urban growth is planned.
- Support Howitt Street as a popular supermarket-based centre which has an established role in the hierarchy, and as an alternative location for shops selling bulky goods type merchandise and service industries.
- Encourage an expanded level of retail development to serve the growing community at Buninyong and the surrounding rural area in a manner that retains the centre's village characteristics.
- Encourage development in neighbourhood shopping centres to occur in such a manner as to improve the visual and functional environment, so that they become amenable and vibrant focal points for local communities.
- Encourage new local centres or shops to be provided in association with new housing development to the extent that such developments can be supported by the surrounding community with locations for such facilities to have regard for the opportunities to serve passing traffic.
- Consider proposals for non-convenience business and non-retail activities within established local centre that have a number of vacant premises where they do not require an expansion to the centre.
- Encourage the establishment of bulky goods retailers within the following locations:
 - (a) Central Business District;
 - (b) Wendouree Peripheral Retailing Precinct;
 - (c) The Howitt Street Neighbourhood Centre;
 - (d) The Sebastopol North Neighbourhood Centre;
 - (e) Ballarat Market Place (Formerly Creswick Plaza).
- Encourage the development of land for bulky goods retailing to occur in an integrated fashion in order to deliver infrastructure savings.
- Encourage the use of private land within the Camp Street precinct for purposes which are compatible with an Arts/Education based precinct.
- Establish a major education/arts based use within existing government buildings in the Camp Street Precinct.
- Establish a major Art Gallery presence within the Camp Street Precinct.
- Establish a place where formal and informal public art and related activities can take place.

21.15-5 Implementing the Strategies through the Planning Scheme

- Including the Ballarat Central Business Area within a Business 1 Zone;
- Recognising existing local convenience centres through their inclusion within the Mixed Use Zone;
- Including Local Planning Policies on commercial land use and development;
- Using the Design and Development Overlay on properties within the Bridge Mall;
- Referencing the Ballarat Central Business Area Strategy and Ballarat Retail Development Strategy 2003.
- Including preferred sites for bulky goods retailing within the Business 4 Zone.
- Including a Local Planning Policy on land use and development within the Camp Street Precinct.
- Including the Camp Street Precinct within an Business 1 Zone and Heritage Overlay.
- Include land within the Alfredton / Delacombe urban growth areas within the Business 1 Zone to facilitate the establishment of a new neighbourhood centre.
- Nominated Wendouree as the primary location for major bulky goods development and provide for the create of approximately 38,000 m2 of additional bulky goods floorspace by 2016 by including land at the front of the Walsh Estate in Learmonth Road within the Business 4 Zone.
- Rezoning land on Albert Street back to Yarrowee Street between Rubicon Street and Bala Street within the Sebastopol North neighbourhood centre to allow for large sites to be established.
- Establish a local planning policy that encourages the consolidation of sites within the Sebastopol North neighbourhood centre and prevents development fronting Yarrowee Street.

21.15-6 Implementing the Strategies through other actions

- Development of a Parking Precinct Plan for the Central Business Area;
- Develop and implement street improvement schemes within the Central Business Area;
- Development and implementation of a framework plan for the Camp Street Precinct;
- Facilitating the establishment of a Victoria Business Centre to assist business development within the City;
- Facilitate the provision of a convention facility for 400 plus people;
- Liaising with developers with a view to encouraging additional commercial development to Ballarat within designated zoned locations.
- Relocate the University of Ballarat School of Arts into the Camp Street Precinct.
- Extend the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery into the Old Police Station in Camp Street.
- Create a public space within Camp Street within the area occupied by the Police Station.
- Undertake streetscape improvements which will enhance the Camp Street Precinct as an area for art/education related activities.