



*BG Urban Solutions*

**SHIRE OF MOORABOOL SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN  
FINAL DRAFT REPORT**

**October 2006**

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## ***Executive Summary***

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#### ***1. Introduction: Why Council needs a SIP***

*Moorabool Shire Council needs a Social Infrastructure Plan as an essential tool to manage recent and expected future residential development within the municipality. Much of that growth has been, and will continue to be concentrated around the Bacchus Marsh-Darley area and the township of Ballan. For this reason the Social Infrastructure Plan focuses its attention on these settlements only, although it should be acknowledged that improved social infrastructure provision in these areas will still have flow on benefits for residents of more isolated areas within the Shire*

As an important preparatory step towards planning for any one new development area within the Moorabool Shire, there is a need to gain an understanding of existing and likely future community infrastructure provision requirements and usage patterns. To develop this understanding it is necessary to undertake two key tasks:

- Review population and urban growth patterns for the Shire, in this case focussing on the two major settlements of Bacchus Marsh and Ballan;
- Review existing community facilities and services with regard to condition of buildings, relevance and accessibility to services, and to consider optimum strategic directions for future provision.

The outcome of these two tasks is the preparation of a Social Infrastructure Plan (SIP) for the townships of Bacchus Marsh and Ballan. This document deals with the range of social infrastructure typically required to support an existing or future community and is intended to document:

- What community facilities and services are expected to be needed,
- When they will be required,
- Where they should be located and
- How they might be funded.

From a clear illustration of future community infrastructure requirements tied to specific growth areas and projected population growth, presented by a Social Infrastructure Plan, it is then possible to identify likely cost implications and appropriate apportionment of costs and how these might be met, including via what proportion is considered reasonable and equitable to be covered by development contributions. This Social Infrastructure Plan for the communities of Bacchus Marsh and Ballan can be regarded, therefore, as one of three key strategic planning documents for Council, together with the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS), as it continues to aim to meet the needs of the communities for which it is responsible.

Three stages were identified for the successful development of the Social Infrastructure Plan. These are:

- A Community Facilities Audit – covering building condition, operational cost and usage trends;
- A Social Infrastructure Plan – covering present and anticipated future needs over the coming 15-20 years, pending confirmation of future population projections / potential residential land yield;



- An Implementation Strategy – consisting of a table listing recommended facilities and services, potential funding sources and recommended timeframe for delivery.

To complete these three stages this Study involved the following tasks:

- A review of population and demographic profile and trends and Council’s urban growth strategies;
- A review of Council strategic documents and policies;
- A review of documented community feedback obtained through the conduct of other related strategic studies, the conduct of consultative forums and presentation of a draft for comments
- Identification, inspection and analysis of existing social infrastructure against established criteria
- An assessment of future needs based on the demographic profile and projections.

From this research and consultation the extensive list of specific recommendations were formed.

## ***2. Policy Basis for Recommendations***

Council’s stated vision for the municipality is that:

“By 2009 Moorabool Shire will be characterised by *viable communities* and towns forming an *integrated* Shire with a *strong identity*” (Moorabool Shire Council Plan 2005-2009; pa 5)

As shown in italics in the above quote, for the purpose of determining necessary future social infrastructure requirements, the key words are considered to be: “viable communities”, “integrated” and with a “strong identity”. What constitutes a viable community has not been defined, however this issue has been briefly discussed in section 1.4, in relation to strategic planning objectives versus the flaws in a “population ratio” approach to social infrastructure provision standards, and is considered in more detail in section 5 below.

With specific regard to services and infrastructure the Council Plan also states that these will be supported by:

- Long term financial forecasting
- Sound financial and resource management;
- Performance based land use planning; and
- Key external partnerships.

The above four criteria have been borne in mind in the course of undertaking a review, or audit, of existing community facilities. The findings of this review are presented in section 4 of this report and followed by recommendations for future provision in section 5.

Also of relevance to the preparation of a Social Infrastructure Plan is Council’s fifth objective, which deals with Services and Infrastructure and which states that Council aims:

- “To provide sustainable quality community services to enhance the wellbeing of the community;
- To undertake maintenance and development works on Shire infrastructure to meet current and future needs and



- Recognise and plan to meet needs of target groups (these being) youth, aged, family and children, and disabled.” (ibid; pa 10-11)

It is considered the above elements of the adopted Council Plan provide a very clear direction for determining need and optimum strategic direction for the planned provision of social infrastructure for the Shire’s two main townships of Ballan and Bacchus Marsh.

The recommendations were also informed by a number of other adopted Council policies and recent strategic reviews. These included:

- Moorabool Health and Well-being Strategy 2003-2006
- Disability Access and Inclusion Policy (2002)
- Moorabool Municipal Strategic Statement Review (2004)
- Ballan Urban Growth Strategy (2004)
- Bacchus Marsh Residential Growth Strategy (2004)
- Bacchus Marsh Accessibility, Traffic Management and Parking Study (2003)
- Bacchus Marsh District Trails Master Plan (2005)
- Municipal Early Years Plan
- Library Review

As a result, the SIP recommendations are all consistent with the directions or recommendations of these other Council documents.

It should also be noted that the assessment of existing infrastructure, along with the recommendations for upgrades and new infrastructure, is based on an assessment of geographical and cultural profiles of the study areas rather than straight population ratios. This approach is supported by the author’s experience in need assessment, particularly in Frankston, Camberwell and Laverton, which highlighted the methodological and political inadequacies (and inaccuracies) of using population ratios as the sole or primary determinant of infrastructure need.

Rather, the approach taken in the preparation of the Moorabool SIP has been to respond to extensive previous local community consultation (particularly feedback obtained through the process of preparing a Social Development Plan (2002) and Health and Well-being Strategy (2003) for the Shire over recent years) and guidance provided by a range of relevant Local and State planning policy and guidelines relating to the need to provide infrastructure within walkable communities as a means of optimising community well-being and consolidating infrastructure through improving accessibility and maximising the utilisation of community facilities. (e.g. Safer Design Guidelines (Dept Justice & DSE, 2004) and SEPA Guidelines for Local Government (Heart Foundation, 1999))



### **3. The Recommendations**

In terms of application, the Social Infrastructure Plan should be used by council and developers in particular, as a reference document in the course of preparing structure plans and detailed development proposals. For example, some 18 hectares of land identified in the Growing Moorabool Strategy (refer SGS Economics and Planning 2006; Section 3.3.2) as appropriate for Activity Centre planning relates to much of the area covered by recommendations for Maddingley and Bacchus Marsh contained in this report (refer section 5.3.1-5.3.9). The final implementation strategy for the SIP should therefore be used to inform the project brief for a Structure Plan for this area.

Note also in relation to some of the recommendations below, the intention is to enable Council to become more strategic in responding to community needs by preventing problems occurring in the first place (e.g. pedestrian safety, older adult social isolation or unfunded infrastructure requirements) or reducing the inefficiency of recurrent costs to Council by facilitating improved and pre-emptive capital investment (e.g. aiming to reduce the recurrent costs to Council of supervised crossings while not compromising the level of safety for school children)

#### **General**

***Note that, wherever applicable, the recommendations herein should be referred to Council for consideration as part of the 20-year Capital Improvement Program, 20-year Financial Plan and Development Contributions Plans (to be prepared). Further, it is intended the Social Infrastructure Plan is used as a reference document in the course of any future preparation of structure plans within the Shire.***

#### **5.1.1 Djerriwarrh Health Services and Ballan District Health & Care**

- The recommended comprehensive upgrade and expansion of the Quamby Community Centre (refer 5.3.1 below) include provision of consulting rooms and meeting space for a range of “visitor providers” of specialist health services;
- The Shire of Moorabool continue to work collaboratively via the Health and Well-Being Advisory Committee towards effective advocacy for improved recognition by funding agencies of the population growth and consequent growing demand for health services in both the Bacchus Marsh – Darely and Ballan and District areas;
- The recommended comprehensive upgrade and expansion to the Ballan District Health & Care Primary Care Centre located in Cowie St Ballan include provisions for additional consulting rooms and meeting space for a range of visiting specialist health services;
- The Shire of Moorabool recognise the importance of improved public transport, pedestrian and cycle supporting infrastructure as key determinants of accessibility to health as well as other services and facilities and prioritise improvements in this area of infrastructure provision accordingly.



**5.1.2 Affordable Housing and Support Services**

- Aim to work with neighbouring municipalities and the State Government to promote a more co-ordinated and preventative approach to dealing with issues of unemployment, family breakdown, mental illness and homelessness.
- In partnership with other key agencies, via establishing a co-ordinating local service provider reference group, seek to advocate for and facilitate improved supply of affordable housing and support services and their provision in locations that are easily accessed by those without a car.

**5.1.3 Visitor Accommodation and Tourism Promotion**

- Council work co-operatively with existing owners of local hotels, motel and caravan parks and potential investors and nearby tourism promotion agencies in Melbourne, Daylesford and Ballarat, to improve the quality and quantity of visitor accommodation;
- Council more actively promote the townships of Bacchus Marsh and Ballan as attractive short term holiday destinations;
- Council actively encourage new visitor accommodation to be developed within 400m of the Ballan and Bacchus Marsh train stations.

**5.1.4 Accessible Housing**

- Council amend its Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) to include a clause to cover (and promote) the provision of affordable and accessible housing, including provision of a map highlighting key sites and precincts (such as those that offer 400m attractive pedestrian routes to shops and public transport);
- Council initiate / convene regular Economic Development Forums, to better promote the social need and housing market opportunities for developers prepared to refine housing product to meet the needs of significant and potentially growing sectors of the community, including older adults and people with disabilities;
- Council use its Capital Works Improvement Programme, together with funding support from Dept of Infrastructure and Dept of Sustainability and Environment, to progressively upgrade identified key pedestrian networks (consistent with the Bacchus Marsh District Trails Master Plan) as a “supporting infrastructure” initiative by Council to attract new housing investment in designated precincts as per amended MSS.

**5.1.5 Bus services**

- Council, in partnership with local bus operators and with support from the Dept of Infrastructure (Office of Public Transport), review existing bus routes to confirm optimum access and efficiency outcomes for both existing and potential patrons seven days a week;
- Council, in partnership with Dept of Infrastructure and local in-kind community feedback and support, identify key locations which require improved supporting infrastructure such as safer bus stop locations, provision of shelters and timetable information.



### **5.1.6 Pedestrian and bicycle networks**

- Council prepare an integrated Pedestrian and Cycle Plan for Dareely – Bacchus Marsh and for Ballan, to rectify existing danger points while more proactively encouraging a healthy and more sustainable transport pattern for existing and future residents. Such a plan would need to identify:
  - The most efficient, safe and attractive routes to key destinations;
  - Adequate pavement widths to accommodate people in wheelchairs, pedestrians and cyclists;
  - Appropriate pavement material to ensure durability, while also safeguarding the comfort of longer distance walkers, the needs of people in wheelchairs and with other forms of disability (e.g. loose gravel can be dangerous for frail aged) and satisfying understandable parental concern regarding the safety of their children.
  
- Council introduce an overlay control into the Moorabool Shire Planning Scheme to ensure existing and future commercial, institutional and private residences contribute positively to the ambience and sense of public safety of the urban context along the routes that form part of the Bacchus Marsh – Darley and Ballan integrated pedestrian and cycle plan/s by prohibiting extensive sections of blank or high walls and other threats to natural surveillance and consequent public safety.
  
- To reduce recurrent costs, Council work with VicRoads and other State Government agencies toward reducing the number of supervised crossings by replacing those locations with the highest vehicle volumes and speeds with upgraded pedestrian operated light facilities. Having regard to existing conditions and community feedback, these “priority” locations currently include:
  - Grant St, near Station St - Griffith St and opposite the swimming pool-Pepper Tree Park entrance;
  - Gisborne Rd, near St Bernard’s Primary School and Lerderderg St;
  - Albert St, opposite Lerderderg Children’s Centre
  - Nelson St, opposite Darley Primary School

Note that future / strategic locations for pedestrian operated lights, to more actively encourage pedestrian activity via improving perceptions of safety, include:

- Grey St, between Dundas St and Darley Plaza;
- Halletts Way, near Durham St and opposite Pentland Primary School-Darley Campus of Bacchus Marsh Secondary College;

Note also that in some high traffic volume locations, including Gisborne Rd near St Bernard’s Primary School, it is likely that continued supervision of the pedestrian crossing will still be required during school start and finish times.



**5.1.7 Strategic Planning: Municipal Strategic Statement & Development Contributions**

- In line with best practice adopted by a number of other municipalities, including the City of Whittlesea and the City of Hobsons Bay, Council insert additional clauses the Moorabool Shire Council's MSS to cover the following matters:
  - Disabled access
  - Walkable neighbourhoods / Sustainable transport Patterns
  - Housing Diversity - Ageing in Place and Visitor Accommodation
  - Tourism
  - Health Promotion
  - Social Infrastructure Funding and Provision.
  
- Council, in accordance with relevant provisions of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (as amended) prepare Development Contributions Plan for each precinct of the existing and future urban areas of the three planning precincts (Darley, Bacchus Marsh and Ballan) for new infrastructure required as a result of all new development, including any redevelopment of existing urban areas.

**5.1.8 Social Impact Assessment**

- Council, prepare and adopt a Social Impact Assessment policy and requirement for all new significant development.

**Darley**

**5.2.1 Lederderg Multi-purpose Community Centre**

- Redevelopment of existing children's centre site to create a permanent and fully integrated early childhood centre, integrated with adjacent Darely primary school.

**5.2.2 Pedestrian and cycling network upgrade, Darley**

- Establish a priority pedestrian and cycle (off-road or otherwise grade separated) network that links key local community, educational, recreational facilities and connection to Bacchus Marsh. Key routes will include:
  - Gisborne Rd
  - Grey St
  - Halletts Way
  - Albert St,
  - Nelson St
  - Fitzroy St
  - Approach streets to Darley Neighbourhood House

**5.2.3 Local Shopping and Community Health services**

- Council work in partnership with local traders and owners of Darley Plaza to promote and foster better social, economic and environmental outcomes for both Darley and Bacchus Marsh by improving local provision of community and shopping facilities in Darley as a local complement to the greater range of retail services that should continue to be concentrated in Bacchus Marsh.



#### **5.2.4 Telford Park**

- Council commence longer-term planning, by formal designation of a site within Telford Park, for the provision of an additional multi-purpose community centre to provide a range of community services within a walkable distance of most homes within this northern precinct within Darley. This facility could be designed to be integrated with the adjacent Darelly Campus of the Bacchus Marsh Secondary College and could conceivably have a commercial component such as café and convenience store.

#### **5.2.5 Darley Neighbourhood House**

- Noting that planning for an upgrade has been approved, improve pedestrian access (e.g. minimum 2.5m footpath network) to the facility from some key destination / linkage points including:
  - Darley primary school and Lerderderg children's centre, via Nelson Street and improved pedestrian crossing facilities where Nelson St intersects with Grey St;
  - Jonathon Drive (where the neighbourhood house is located) and adjacent un-landscaped reserve;
  - Grey St and Morrison Drive;
- Create a direct pedestrian link from the south side of Grey St, perhaps at the southern end of McMahon Court, through to the northern side of Jonathon Drive, subject to the views and co-operation of existing residents and relevant landowners.

### **Bacchus Marsh**

#### **5.3.1 Quamby Community Centre (Redevelopment into an integrated community and health care centre)**

- Demolish the existing centre and redevelop the site to accommodate a new multi-purpose health and community centre with the following components:
  - Entrance foyer that doubles as exhibition space (estimate 60sqm)
  - Senior Citizens wing that includes all the existing distinct elements but with central access, to allow for broader community use, of the kitchen (refer below) and dance hall;
  - Full commercial kitchen
  - Medium-sized dance hall to accommodate 100 people – table setting and dance floor
  - Maternal and Child Health centre (replacing temporary facility in Gell St) and including consulting room and adjacent small community meeting room (refer below)
  - Relocated Pre-school (from Young Street)
  - Occasional Child Care
  - Integrated health care centre (including consulting rooms for visiting specialists)
  - Small community room – up to 20 adults seated boardroom or theatre style, with kitchenette, to be shared by MCH programme /other community service/ health programme providers;
  - Larger community room – up to 60 adults seated theatre style, with kitchenette



- Connecting north and east facing courtyard that serves Senior citizens, small and larger community rooms and entrance foyer
- Office space for Council staff (e.g. Aged Services Division) and other visiting paediatric and / or community health specialist services.

**5.3.2 Improving housing choice for older adults and people with disabilities**

- Council works with the residential development industry to facilitate medium-density housing and supported accommodation for older adults within 400m of the Main Street shopping precinct, Maddingley Park and Bacchus Marsh train station, underpinned by high quality pedestrian pathways that facilitate easy and safe access to commercial areas.

**5.3.3 Rotary Park – Incorporation of permanent in-ground Skate Park**

- A permanent in-ground skate ramp facility be established within Rotary Park and within the immediate vicinity of the location of the current temporary facility;
- The current master planning process for Rotary Park (in progress) should also take into account and accommodate the recommendations in relation to the redevelopment of the Quamby Community Centre

**5.3.4 Pedestrian and Cycle Network Upgrade**

- A *priority pedestrian and cycle network*, designed to suit everyone from the learner cyclist to the slowest pedestrian, be established via the following:
  - Station Street and Griffith St, east and west of Grant Street;
  - Bond St, including the extension of Bond St from Park Street, across Taverner St and all the way through to Simpson St (refer also 5.3.5 below);
  - Grant St - Gisborne Rd (extension of pathway on west side of, at least, as first priority);
  - Labilliere St
  - Graham St – Gell St;
  - Bennett St;
  - Young St;
  - Crock St and
  - Main St.
- The potential for enclosing the Southern Rural Water irrigation channel and turning it into an off-road pedestrian/cycling track that provides north south access between Darley and Bacchus Marsh be investigated. Natural surveillance opportunities should be identified as a way of ensuring this potential arterial connection is safe and well used.



**5.3.5 Library / Youth Resource Centre / Civic Centre / Performing Arts Precinct**

- A comprehensive redevelopment of this precinct be designed to:
  - Create more efficient land use, including the addition of two to three storey upper levels for Council offices over existing car park area;
  - Better integrate existing and additional community and historic facilities;
  - Consolidate council administration and office requirements;
  - Ensure good physical integration and access to the Youth Resource Centre currently planned for the site of the old Bacchus Marsh Depot building at the rear of council offices;
  - Create an attractive and well designed (minimum 2.5m) promenade that links the civic precinct directly (i.e. due south with no inconvenient meanderings) with the Bacchus Marsh train station via an extension and continuation of Bond St along eastern edge of Maddingley Park, across Werribee River (prompting the need for a footbridge) and integration with future subdivision of land between Werribee River and Main St / civic precinct;
  - Improve natural surveillance of Main St via upper level (two – three level staged setback) offices (as per above) and provision of a formal public plaza;
  - Create space for:
    - Mid-sized community meetings (60-100 people)
    - Larger scale events e.g. dance hall/function centre to accommodate 300-700 people table setting for Debutante Balls or other cultural events.
    - Performance spaces for varying scales of production (e.g. 700 seat theatre, 200 seat performance space and ancillary outdoor amphitheatre / north facing public plaza)
    - Community health centre
    - Library and Adult Learning Centre (1000 sqm, with adult learning space being available for use free of charge by The Laurels);
    - Occasional child care
    - Radio Station – relocation of Apple FM.

**5.3.6 Maddingley Park and surrounds**

- A progressive upgrade of existing facilities continue, to raise the general standard of facilities and to promote the venue as the possible “sentimental heart of Bacchus Marsh” and, therefore, an ideal venue for outdoor cinema, community festivals, Carols by Candlelight or other special events such as occasional live music/ drama/ outdoor cinema performances.
- Council offer a land swap and other supporting initiatives to enable a relocation of existing industrial land uses in Bond St to the existing industrial area on the south east side of Griffith St (e.g. Hillside industrial estate or the Council refuse transfer station) or another suitable location.
- The Moorabool Planning Scheme be amended to accommodate rezoning of the affected precinct to facilitate residential and tourism related medium-density (one to two storey) housing to accommodate existing unmet needs of residents (particularly older adults and others who wish to reduce their dependency on the car) and visitors (particularly hikers, and other visitors



including Melbourne-based residents looking for a readily accessible weekend away). For further details, refer to section 5.1.3 of this report.

### **5.3.7 Maddingley Primary School**

- The site for the new Maddingley Primary School be a 3.5 hectare site (DE&T standard requirement) located to the west of Labelliere St and approaching the Werribee River.
- There are a range of benefits for such a site, including retaining walking access to the Ecolinc centre, which is also located in Labelliere St and on the western edge of the Maddingley campus of the Bacchus Marsh secondary college.
- The task of confirming the actual site for this new school is a matter for the next review of Council's Municipal Strategic Statement and more detailed Local Structure Plan for this part of the municipality.
- The internal layout of the new school be confirmed as part of the Local Structure Planning process with a view to ensuring either co-location or full integration with the Maddingley Community Centre (refer 5.3.8 below).

### **5.3.8 Maddingley community centre**

- A new Maddingley Community Centre be located towards western edge of the existing urban area (Barry Street) and the beginning of the proposed growth area and adjacent to, if not actually fully integrated with, the ultimate site for the recommended Maddingley primary school (refer 5.3.7 above).
- With regard to content the Maddingley Community Centre, depending on whether this facility is physically integrated as part of the recommended Maddingley Primary School, elements would include:
  - MCH / allied health outreach consulting room/s
  - Pre-school
  - Long Day and Occasional Child care\*
  - Small and larger community meeting rooms
  - Kitchen (full commercial kitchen maximises range of community uses including Meals on Wheels and other catering functions)
  - Outdoor play and function areas associated with Pre-school, child care and general community uses.
- Detailed planning to confirm the location and timing of this facility be undertaken as part of more detailed Local Structure Plan preparation as the next step in the strategic planning process from the Bacchus Marsh Residential Growth Strategy.

### **5.3.9 Bacchus Marsh Railway Station**

- The Bacchus Marsh train station be internally refurbished, in keeping with its heritage character.



#### **5.3.10 Bacchus Marsh pool**

- The Bacchus Marsh pool be upgraded to incorporate the following essential components:
  - 8 lane, heated enclosed facility;
  - Improved change rooms;
  - Ramp disabled access;
  - Associated ancillary activities including café/convenience store and specialist retail outlet (selling swimwear, towels, goggles etc);
  - Associated outdoor BBQ and picnic facilities to complement those in Pepper Tree Park;
  - Waste Water recycling and watering system to improve quality of landscaped surrounds including Pepper Tree Park

### **Ballan**

#### **5.4.1 Ballan MCH/pre-school**

- Council implement plans for the upgrade of this facility to improve storage space, staff amenity and increased space for group sessions.

#### **5.4.2 Caledonian Park**

- Council, in partnership with DSE, work towards improving the park with regard to the following details:
  - Clarify ownership and maintenance responsibilities between State and Local government;
  - Replace existing toilet block and ensure design in accordance with CPTED principles;
  - Extend formal pathway networks throughout the park;
  - Improve safety priority for pedestrian access across Stead St / Ballan – Greendale Rd.
  - In partnership with State government investigate ways to promote increased community use of this facility.

#### **5.4.3 Ballan Recreation Reserve**

A master plan (with extensive community consultation) was prepared for the reserve in 2002.

However, this may need to be reviewed / updated pending findings of the current recreation strategy.

Should a review / update of the Master Plan be deemed necessary, Council, in partnership with the DSE appointed Committee of Management, should include a comprehensive community consultation process that ensures input from children and youth as well as adults and should address the following issues:

:

- Investigate the need or community interest in providing any other sporting activities;
- upgrade of toilet, kitchen and change room facilities,
- provide shaded seating areas and
- provide better internal traffic management and
- provide formal pedestrian linkage to nearby Ballan Train Station



#### ***5.4.4 Ballan Railway Station***

Council, working in partnership with VLine, VicTrack and Heritage Victoria, facilitate process of continued upgrade (funded by the State government) of existing buildings to provide a better standard of comfort for all patrons including those who require disabled access. Key improvements required include:

- More attractive and spacious sheltered waiting areas on the station platform and within the building;
  - Re-placement of out of character heaters with those more efficient gas heaters of a style in sympathy with building design;
  - Creation of station café and newsstand as a separate commercial business;
  - Improve pedestrian and cycle pathway access and crossings to designate safe routes from town centre and Ballan recreation reserve;
  - Provide bicycle storage / parking facilities within 50m from station entrance.
- 
- Council initiate discussions with key State agencies regarding land owned by VLine as part of the railway reserve, to facilitate some limited residential development of cottage style (one – two storey housing in keeping with the character of the township) visitor and resident accommodation.

#### ***5.4.5 Ballan Hospital and Aged Care Hostel***

Council continue to facilitate a co-ordinated approach to planning for the increased capacity of the existing hospital and aged care facility. Based on service provider feedback it is anticipated there will continue to be a need for:

- Additional high level care beds for older adults
- Additional independent living / supported accommodation units
- Additional general hospital beds in accordance with DHS population ratio provisions.
- Additional capacity to accommodate local and visiting primary care and specialist health services; and an urgent need for an expanded primary care facility at the existing Cowie St site to create a “one stop shop” for local and visiting health, welfare and family support services.

#### ***5.4.6 Ballan Court House***

Council seek volunteer input to:

- Confirm a management, use and business plan for the building;
- improve landscaping around court house building and replace existing front fence with a design more in keeping with heritage building style;
- gauge community interest in establishing “Tea Gardens”, art display or some other commercial component to the facility;
- establish adequate display space for the Ballan Historical Society’s existing collection.

## ***4. Implementation***



**Table 2: Social Infrastructure Plan - Implementation Schedule**

Schedule/ Timeframe	Project Description	Est. Cost	Funding Sources & Responsible Agencies
<b>Immediate</b> Overall	<b>“Getting Organised”</b> 5.1.1 Djerriwarrh & Ballan Health 5.1.2 Affordable housing support 5.1.4 Accessible Housing 5.1.7 MSS & DCP 5.1.8 SIA	<b>C/I time as facilitator / strategic planning</b>	Dept Human Services, C/I as advocate DHS, MAV, adjoining C/ls C/I, private developers C/I C/I
Darley	<b>“Part 1 Implementation”</b> 5.2.1 Lerderderg Com Centre 5.2.2 Ped’n & Cycle upgrade 5.2.5 Darley NH	<b>\$2.25m \$40,000 \$1.1m</b>	DHS, DCP, DVC DVC, DS&R, DSE (M2030)
Bacchus Marsh	5.3.1 Quamby 5.3.3 Rotary Park 5.3.4 Ped’n & Cycle upgrade	<b>\$6.25m Minimal \$64,000</b>	<b>**fully funded** ready to go**</b> Fed Aged Care, DHS, DVC, DCP DS&R
Ballan	5.4.3 Recreation Reserve 5.4.5 Hospital and Aged Care		DVC, DS&R, DSE (M2030) DS&R, DCP, C/I advocacy
<b>2006-2011</b> Overall	<b>“Part 2 Implementation”</b> 5.1.3 Visitor Accom etc 5.1.5 Bus Services	<b>nil to C/I “ “</b>	
Darley	5.2.3 Darley Plaza	<b>“</b>	VicTrack, priv. developers, existing ops
Bacchus Marsh	5.3.2 Housing choice 5.3.5 Civic Precinct 5.3.6 Maddingley Park 5.3.9 Train Station	<b>“ \$15m est \$5m est \$1m est</b>	DoI, existing operators, C/I C/I facilitate private sector investment C/I facilitate private sector investment
Ballan	5.3.10 Pool 5.4.1 MCH 5.4.2 Caledonia Park 5.4.4 Train Station 5.4.6 Court House	<b>\$4m est \$2m est \$2m est \$1m est Nominal</b>	DS&R, DVC, Other State Govt DS&R, Heritage Victoria, in kind Heritage Victoria, Private op’s DHS, DS&R,
<b>2012-2021</b> Overall	<b>“Part 3 Implementation”</b>		
Darley	5.2.4 Com Cntr – Telford Park	<b>\$6.5m est</b>	DSE, Parks Vic, In kind, DCP,
Bacchus Marsh	5.3.7 Maddingley Primary School 5.3.8 Maddingley Com Cntr	<b>\$5m est \$2.25m</b>	DHS, DVC, DE&T, DCP, DE&T DVC, DCP
Ballan <b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$44.35m est. over 15 years</b>	



## **1. Introduction**

Over recent years, it could be argued that urban planning in Victoria has become more “organised”. Major planning policy reform, along with local government reform, occurred during the late 1990s, which ultimately saw the introduction of a Local and State Planning Policy Framework (LPPF and SPPF) introduced to the planning system. These policy frameworks were intended to provide further guidance with regard to “orderly and proper” development in Victoria, in addition to the guidance provided by the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

In 1995, a new Part B (covering S46H-Q) was introduced to the Planning and Environment Act (the Act) which made provision for the application of “development contributions” as one of the means by which a Responsible Authority (typically local councils) could aim to fund new social and physical infrastructure required as a direct result of new development.

However, prior to any application of a development contribution “levy” the responsible authority is obliged to prepare a Development Contribution Plan (DCP). The required scope and contents of a DCP are specified in S46I-K of the Act and includes acknowledgement of the appropriateness of a community infrastructure levy, in relation to the development of land in the area to which the plan applies (refer S46J).

As an important preparatory step towards drafting a DCP for any one new development area within the Moorabool Shire, there is a need to gain an understanding of existing and likely future community infrastructure provision requirements and usage patterns. To develop this understanding it is necessary to undertake two key tasks:

- Review population and urban growth patterns for the Shire, in this case focussing on the two major settlements of Bacchus Marsh and Ballan;
- Review existing community facilities and services with regard to condition of buildings, relevance and accessibility to services, and to consider optimum strategic directions for future provision.

The outcome of these two tasks is the preparation of a Social Infrastructure Plan (SIP) for the townships of Bacchus Marsh and Ballan. This document deals with the range of social infrastructure typically required to support an existing or future community and is intended to document:

- What community facilities and services are expected to be needed,
- When they will be required,
- Where they should be located and
- How they might be funded.

From a clear illustration of future community infrastructure requirements tied to specific growth areas and projected population growth, presented by a Social Infrastructure Plan, it is then possible to identify likely cost implications and appropriate apportionment of costs and how these might be met, including via what proportion is considered reasonable and equitable to be covered by development contributions. This Social Infrastructure Plan for the communities of Bacchus Marsh and Ballan can be regarded, therefore, as one of three key strategic planning documents for Council, together with the



Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS), as it continues to aim to meet the needs of the communities for which it is responsible.

In terms of application, the Social Infrastructure Plan should be used by council and developers in particular, as a reference document in the course of preparing structure plans and detailed development proposals. For example, some 18 hectares of land identified in the Growing Moorabool Strategy (refer SGS Economics and Planning 2006; Section 3.3.2) as appropriate for Activity Centre planning relates to much of the area covered by recommendations for Maddingley and Bacchus Marsh contained in this report (refer section 5.3.1-5.3.9 of this report). ***The final implementation strategy for the SIP should therefore be used to inform the project brief for a Structure Plan for this area.***

### **1.1 Purpose of the Project**

Three stages were identified for the successful development of the Social Infrastructure Plan. These are:

- A Community Facilities Audit – covering building condition, operational cost and usage trends;
- A Social Infrastructure Plan – covering present and anticipated future needs over the coming 15-20 years, pending confirmation of population projections / potential residential land yield;
- An Implementation Strategy – which will essentially consist of a table listing recommended facilities and services, potential funding sources and recommended timeframe for delivery.



## **1.2 Methodology**

In the course of generating the three key products listed in section 1.1, the following key steps were undertaken:

- Review relevant background reports and identify key themes,
- Test relevance and accuracy of findings with internal (Council) and external community and social infrastructure providers;
- Undertake site visits at key locations and times to monitor existing behaviour, use of community facilities and movement patterns and other issues;
- Undertake audits of key community facilities with regard to use levels, accessibility, building conditions and maintenance costs relative to community benefits gained;
- Review population projections and growth area plans for Bacchus Marsh and Ballan;
- Draft recommendations for key components of Social Infrastructure Plan and validity testing with Council senior management, internal and external providers; and then
- Finalise recommendations and compile implementation strategy.



### 1.3 Defining Social Infrastructure

For the purpose of this project, “social infrastructure” includes the following elements, all of which can be recognised as making a positive and meaningful impact, by their presence, on the quality of life for the members of the community in question:

- **Community facilities:** the buildings from which a range of services for a cross-section of the community e.g. youth activity centres, community centres or children’s centre, senior citizens centre, community hall, medical and community health centres and hospital, aged care accommodation and associated commercial facilities such as chemist;
- **Community services:** e.g. early childhood programmes such as Maternal and Child Health (MCH), Family Day Care, Pre-School, long day and occasional child care; schools, adult day care programmes, library, disability support and recreation programmes, community health and school nursing programmes; and
- **Supporting physical infrastructure:** the existence or otherwise of key aspects of the physical urban environment that either contributes to or detracts from the well-being of members of the community e.g. the absence or presence of safe pedestrian and cycle paths / networks and crossing points; recreational and shopping facilities that can be identified as contributing to social / mental health and well-being, affordability and physically healthy lifestyles.

### 1.4 Defining Need

In the past, and typically more for the purposes of convenience, there has been a tendency to rely on population-to-facility ratios, as a means of setting some quantifiable “standards” for community services and facilities provision. For some State government agencies responsible for ensuring a fair distribution of funding based on demonstrable need, the use of quantitative analysis of demographic variables is an important and legitimate component of their methodology.

However, for strategic planning purposes and especially in cases where the task at hand is to identify key issues that need to be addressed to safeguard and enhance the general quality of life for a particular community, this quantitative approach is, at best, less useful than a more comprehensive and qualitative approach that has also been informed by a substantive community consultation component. At worst, the attempt to generate “a neat little table of ratios” can hide a super-imposed set of standards (begging the question, “whose standards?”) and can fail to take proper account of variations in local cultural and / or geographical circumstances.

One of the main undesirable consequences of failing to take into account such variations is to generate an assessment of need that is not politically defensible, an essential key to successful implementation. Another likely consequence is the negative impact on quality of life for some sectors / neighbourhoods within the community where the “need” for a facility is deemed unwarranted, even though this assessment may well cause severe hardship, or even death, for some individuals e.g. in the case of determining the need for pedestrian crossings along a busy road even though the existing number of



pedestrians is deemed (by some population formula / ratio) too low; or in the case for providing increased funding for home nursing support to enable frail aged to continue to live in their own home.

By way of further illustration of this point about the inadequacy of population ratios as a basis for determining need and informed by case study experience that, in Victoria, has ranged from needs assessment in such diverse locations as Frankston (1999), Camberwell (2005) and Laverton (2005), it is considered there are several credibility risks associated with this approach to defining community need. These risks include that such an approach does not:

- reflect local socio-economic variations;
- take proper account of the existence of physical or psychological barriers, such as railway lines and freeways, that can significantly hamper access to services and facilities;
- take proper account of differing social and physical resource bases that enable / prohibit consideration and use of some community services or facilities, compared to another community, because they do / do not exist, or are in varying state of repair;
- reflect differing cultural traditions; or
- take proper account of differing priorities held by one community versus another.

Moreover, when consulting local residents and where residents are given the opportunity to nominate the key issues / features of their daily lives that make their overall quality of life that much better or worse, the feedback thus obtained tends to generate a clearer indication of what are the existing strengths and unmet needs in the eyes of the true experts: members of the local community themselves.

In the case of Moorabool Shire Council, much recent community consultation work has been done that has provided a clear indication of the priorities held by local residents. This consultation feedback includes that already generated by recent strategic planning projects, detailed in the following sections of the report. In particular, the resultant priorities are acknowledged in sections 2 and 3 of this report.



## **2. Review Background Reports**

The following local policies and background reports have been reviewed for the purpose of illustrating Council's current understanding and established priorities with regard to community needs and general well being and the existing strategic planning framework, which will form the basis for predicting future social infrastructure needs and requirements to be specified in the Social Infrastructure Plan. These relevant documents are:

- Council Plan 2005-2009 (draft)
- Moorabool Social Development Plan
- Moorabool Health and Well Being Strategy
- Disability Access and Inclusion Policy & Disability Action Plan
- Moorabool MSS Review (consultation and supporting documentation)
- Ballan Urban Growth Strategy
- Bacchus Marsh Residential Growth Strategy
- Bacchus Marsh Accessibility Traffic Management and Parking Plan
- Bacchus Marsh District Trails Master Plan.

It should be noted the preparation of a Social Infrastructure Plan for Bacchus Marsh and Ballan has also been guided by the following other relevant documents and guidelines:

- Population Projections, as set out in the MSS Review
- Development Contributions Plan (draft)
- Master Plans for Rotary Park and Darley Park
- Moorabool Shire Youth Resource Centre Proposal
- Safer Design Guidelines (DSE and DoJ, 2004)
- Supportive Environments for Physical Activity: Guidelines for Local Gov't (Heart Foundation 1999)

The key findings from the review of these background reports are presented in summary form in the following subsections. Note that key words and phrases considered important for their guidance regarding priorities and standards for social infrastructure provision, or otherwise of particular relevance, are shown in italics.

First, though, it is important to review current and projected population trends for the two townships of Ballan and Bacchus Marsh and these are presented in the following section.



## **2.1 Population Trends**

The Ballan Growth Strategy and the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) provides a useful overview of population trends within the Shire of Moorabool and the Shire's two main townships of Ballan and Bacchus Marsh. In section 5.1 (pa 21) of the Ballan Growth Strategy the following population trends are noted:

- **With regard to the Shire of Moorabool:**
  - As at Census 2001, the Shire's total population stood at 25,090\*, having increased by approximately 1.8% or 2153 people since 1996 (\*Note that by 2005, ABS population estimates, as per Council's website, indicate the Shire's population had grown to 26,800);
  - In terms of more detailed historic data for the Shire, it is useful to note the sustained population growth trend experienced since 1981, when the population for the whole municipality stood at 14,691, to 2001, when the population reached approximately 24,000\* representing a net increase of some 10,000 people. (\*Note: some variation in counts can occur in Census data, with this figure being sourced from DSE publication Regional Victoria in Fact, 2003, pa 128).
  - It is also important to observe that average per annum growth rates for the Shire have varied considerably, from a peak of 4.7% during the period 1986-1991 to a more steady rate of 1.7%\* (\*as per above note) for the period 1996-2001.
- **With regard to Ballan:**
  - The population has been growing steadily from a small base of 681 people in 1981 to 1414 people by 1996 and 1730 people by 2001, this latter period producing a net growth of 316 people and represented a 22% increase since 1996 or an average per annum growth rate of 4.5% over the period 1996-2001;
- **With regard to Bacchus Marsh:**
  - The population of Bacchus Marsh grew from 11,280 in 1996 to 12,130 by 2001, representing a net increase of 850 people or 7.5% over the five year period and an average per annum growth rate of 1.5%

With regard to assessing future social infrastructure requirements, it is important to also note key demographic trends within the overall pattern of growth.



Historic census data is only readily available for the Shire as a whole. Using two key references, Victoria in Time (DoI, 1996; pa 134) and Regional Victoria in Fact (DSE, 2003; pa 128), some historic trend data is available.

The key demographic trends can be summarised as follows:

○ **Age: Proportional decline in younger age groups, growth in older age groups**

- 0-4yrs: a decline from 9.1% in 1981 to 7.6% by 2001;
- 5-17yrs: a decline from 26.6% in 1981 to 20.3% by 2001;
- 18-24yrs: a decline from 10.7% in 1981 to 7.9% by 2001;
- 25-34yrs: a decline from 16.6% in 1981 to 12.4% by 2001;
- 35-49yrs: growth from 16.7% in 1981 to 24.5% by 2001;
- 50-59yrs: growth from 8.2% in 1981, to 12.1% by 2001;
- 60yrs or more: growth from 12.2% in 1981 to 12.9 by 2001

Note that even where there has been proportional decline, this has still meant numeric increases in all age groups.

○ **Household Size: Decline of larger households, increase in smaller households**

- 1-2 persons: growth from 42% in 1981 to 49.3% by 2001;
- 3-4 persons: little net change form 35.6% in 1981 to 36% by 2001;
- 5 people or more: decline from 22.4% in 1981 to 14.7% by 2001.

○ **Dwelling type: Detached house still the main option**

- Separate House: increase from 93.4% in 1981 to 95.7% by 2001;
- Medium Density: decline from 5.1% in 1981 to 2.7% by 2001;
- Other: decline from 1.5% in 1981 to 1.1% by 2001.

Note that the housing trend in Moorabool has run counter to the Melbourne metropolitan trend of an increase in the proportion of medium density housing within the total housing stock, suggesting a clear preference for spaciousness amongst those who choose to call the Moorabool Shire Council home.

However, it should also be noted that some variation in the above trend data with regard to age and household size could be expected in the years to come, given the ageing of the local population and the range of health and lifestyle benefits to older adults if they are able to live within walking distance of shops, public transport, community and medical facilities.



This is especially the case given the eventual necessity to give up driving and the documented social isolation that invariably follows as a result, in low density suburban contexts. (Harris and Seymour, 2002).

○ **Housing Tenure – Fewer fully own, more still purchasing their home, as at 2001:**

- Fully owned: 41% compared with 45.6% for Regional Victoria overall;
- Purchasing: 38.8% compared with 26.9% for Regional Victoria overall;
- Govt Rental: 2.8% compared with 3.9% for Regional Victoria overall;
- Private Rental: 11.3% compared with 16.6% for Regional Victoria overall;

Note that local service provider advice indicated the majority of government rental housing stock for the Shire was concentrated in Darely, a northern suburb of Bacchus Marsh which is located north of the Western Highway and does not offer good pedestrian access to a range of shopping and community facilities within walking distance. This access is significant as local service provider feedback also indicates a high proportion of government rental households do not have a car.

○ **Cultural profile – Greater predominance on English speaking households, as at 2001:**

- Speak English only: 92.1% compared with 90.9% for Regional Victoria overall;
- Top five languages spoken other than English:
  - Italian 0.7%
  - German 0.4%
  - Maltese 0.4%
  - Greek 0.3%
  - Netherlandic 0.3%
  - All other lang. 2.1%
  - Total other lang. 4.2%

○ **Number of Vehicles per household: Higher dependency on the car, as at 2001:**

- None: 4.7% compared with 7.7% for Regional Victoria overall;
- One: 27.7% compared with 34.8% for Regional Victoria overall;
- Two: 41.7% compared with 36.1% for Regional Victoria overall;
- Three or more: 21.8% compared with 16.0% for Regional Victoria overall;

Note: The above figures show a markedly higher level of motor vehicle ownership amongst Moorabool Shire residents compared to their other regional counterparts. Local service provider feedback indicates, not surprisingly, this higher car dependency reflects the high proportion of local residents who commute to Melbourne for work and do so predominantly by car.



This behaviour pattern holds a number of social and economic implications for the existing and future community, not least of which being the absence of a significant number of residents from Shire townships during the day and a regular pattern of mass exodus and return each working day via significant morning and evening peak hours. It also highlights the need for community services and facilities to be available outside conventional working hours, if commuters are to have the same access to services as those who tend to stay within their township during the day.

Also, with a comparatively higher dependence on the car and a contemporary context of substantial increase in the price of petrol (\$1-\$1.40 /ltr in 2005 compared to \$0.80/ltr or less prior to 2003) it is also important to acknowledge the potential impact on local economic activity and the potential for increased financial pressure on households, for many of whom expenditure on petrol is considered a necessary rather than discretionary expenditure item.

○ **Mode of Travel to Work – High dependency on the car, as at 2001:**

- Public transport 2.2% compared with 0.4% for Regional Victoria overall;
- Car as driver 65.0% compared with 60.2% for Regional Victoria overall;
- Car as passenger 5.2% compared with 5.7% for Regional Victoria overall;
- Walk 2.3% compared with 5.1% for Regional Victoria overall;
- Bicycle 0.3% compared with 1.1% for Regional Victoria overall;
- Worked at home 6.3% compared with 8.8% for Regional Victoria overall;
- Did not go to wk 11.2% compared with 11.9% for Regional Victoria overall;

Note that usage of public transport is markedly higher than that for Regional Victoria overall, however this difference should be recognised as a reflection of the fact that many regional townships have little if anything in the way of public transport services.

The figure has more meaning when compared with Ballarat which, like Bacchus Marsh and Ballan, also has a train station and where 1.0% of the workforce travels by public transport (DSE, 2003; pa 75), and the Melbourne MSD, which adjoins the Shire to the east and where 7.4% of the workforce travels by this mode (DSE, 2003 a); pa 33).

Population forecasts for both Ballan and Bacchus Marsh are detailed in the Ballan Urban Growth Strategy (Hansen Partnership et al, 2004), the Bacchus Marsh Residential growth Strategy (2004) and the Moorabool Municipal Strategic Statement Review (Moorabool Shire Council, July 2004).

A summary of these population forecasts are as follows:



○ **Ballan**

- Given average annual population growth rates between 1981 and 2001 ranged from 4.1% and 6.1%, three growth scenarios were calculated on the basis of three different average per annum growth assumptions, these being 4%, 5% and 6%.
- Based on the above assumptions the following growth scenarios were generated for Ballan:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Forecast Range</b>	
	<b>Bottom limit</b>	<b>Upper limit</b>
<b>2001</b>	1,730	1,730
<b>2006</b>	2,104	2,315
<b>2011</b>	2,560	3,098
<b>2016</b>	3,115	4,146
<b>2021</b>	3,790	5,548
<b>2026</b>	4,611	7,424
<b>2031</b>	5,610	9,935

Source: Hansen Partnership et al; 2004 page 23.

It should be noted that the above forecasts are a simple though useful indication of possible future scenarios based solely on past population growth trends. While this method of forecasting is extremely useful, it does not take into account potential inhibitors or catalysts for future population growth such as:

- limits or spare capacity of existing social and physical infrastructure,
- limited or additional (suitable) land supply being available, or
- the preferred quality of life requirements of existing and future residents and the extent to which these are met or safeguarded as a community continues to grow.

Nor do the forecasts take into account affordability issues such as the potential impact of the rising cost of land, continued level of local or regional employment opportunities and travel costs associated with regular commuting that is, or may be, the necessary lifestyle for some portion of the community.

It should also be noted that, at present, Ballan is an attractive small township consisting, in the main, of a:

- traditional precinct focused around the train station and main-street within a walkable 500 metres of each other via attractive streetscape settings;
- peripheral new residential development to the east of the main town centre, not quite within a comfortable walking distance of the town centre;
- newer residential development in the area north of the Werribee River; and
- generally good complement of local shopping and community facilities.

Current birth data for the Ballan and nearby Bungaree area stand at around 100 births per annum\* and building approvals over the last three year have averaged around 30 dwellings. (\*Refer birth data in Appendix 4 for Shire of Moorabool.)



○ **Bacchus Marsh**

- For this township, which includes the settlement of Darley north of the Western Freeway, a different methodology was used to generate population forecasts, these being based on assumptions regarding:
  - building completions
  - occupancy rates
  - average household size of 2.91(2006) – 2.54 persons (by 2031)
  - average lot size of 650 sqm
  - possible impacts of external planning polices such as Melbourne 2030.
- Two growth scenarios were generated, with Scenario 1 being, in addition to the above factors, based on a maximum absorption rate of 350 dwellings per annum by 2021, compared to the 2004 average of 120 dwellings. Scenario 2 was then based on a 50% higher growth rate than that anticipated in Scenario 1.
- Based on the above assumptions the following growth scenarios were generated for Bacchus Marsh:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Scenario 1</b>	<b>Scenario 2</b>
<b>2001 (Actual pop'n)</b>	14,697	14,697
<b>2006 (Net increase)</b>	1,293	2,943
<b>2011</b> “	1,690	3,530
<b>2016</b> “	2,180	4,230
<b>2021</b> “	2,800	5,080
<b>2026</b> “	3,520	6,100
<b>2031</b> “	3,390	7,320
<b>Total Pop'n Increase</b>	<b>14,873</b>	<b>29,203</b>
<b>Total Pop'n by 2031</b>	<b>29,570</b>	<b>43,900</b>

Source: Actual and derived figures from Shire Moorabool, July 2004; Table 3 pa 9.

It should be noted that similar comments apply to those made in relation to the population forecasts for Ballan, in relation to the likelihood either of these scenarios will, in fact, materialise. Beyond that, based on more recent development trend advice from Council planning officers, Scenario 1 is the more likely future reality.

Like Ballan, actual population growth trends will be a product of a number of socio-economic factors and the extent to which Council and the development process is able to respond to / take advantage of existing social and physical infrastructure capacities and needs. However, in addition to these factors it is considered implementation of the State Government’s metropolitan strategy Melbourne 2030 will also boost demand for housing in Bacchus Marsh, given the latter’s location on the periphery of the western Melbourne metropolitan boundary.

Note that current per annum births for Bacchus Marsh and Darley combined stand at around 250\* and building approvals per annum are averaging 165 per annum. (\*Refer data in Appendix 4 for total births per annum for whole Shire of Moorabool.)



## **2.2 Shire of Moorabool Council Plan 2005-2009**

Council's stated vision for the municipality is that:

“By 2009 Moorabool Shire will be characterised by *viable communities* and towns forming an *integrated Shire* with a *strong identity*” (Shire of Moorabool Council Plan 2005-2009; pa 5)

As shown in italics in the above quote, for the purpose of determining necessary future social infrastructure requirements, the key words are considered to be: “viable communities”, “integrated” and with a “strong identity”. What constitutes a viable community has not been defined, however this issue has been briefly discussed in section 1.4 above, in relation to strategic planning objectives versus the flaws in a “population ratio” approach to social infrastructure provision standards, and is considered in more detail in section 5 below.

With specific regard to services and infrastructure the Council Plan also states that these will be supported by:

- Long term financial forecasting
- Sound financial and resource management;
- Performance based land use planning; and
- Key external partnerships.

The above four criteria have been borne in mind in the course of undertaking a review, or audit, of existing community facilities. The findings of this review are presented in section 4 of this report and followed by recommendations for future provision in section 5.

For example, in the course of undertaking the review of existing facilities the ability to fund new infrastructure and the recurrent costs of existing facilities, especially where there were high recurrent costs due to building inefficiency or poor natural resource management due to poor design, were key considerations in determining whether continuation of existing arrangements could be justified versus the greater merit (based on the above four criteria) of some comprehensive redevelopment of facilities or better integration between council and other external service providers.

Council's stated mission includes:

“managing and fairly distributing resources for the betterment of all.” (ibid; pa 5)

Also, adopted principles and values include “community engagement” (ibid; pa 6) and recognised challenges include “understanding the growing impact of urbanisation and its resulting pressures on social cohesion and built infrastructure.” (ibid; pa 7)

Key priority areas identified in the Council Plan include Community Development (ibid; pa 7) and likewise is identified as a Key Result Area for Council. Community Development is also the third of seven stated Council objectives and specifically states that Council aims:



“To develop communities across the Shire in an appropriate way: recognising different needs and priorities; helping communities help themselves (and achieve their goals) by understanding their needs and issues and supporting, encouraging and valuing them.” (ibid; pa 10)

Also of relevance to the preparation of a Social Infrastructure Plan is Council’s fifth objective, which deals with Services and Infrastructure and which states that Council aims:

- “To provide sustainable quality community services to enhance the wellbeing of the community;
- To undertake maintenance and development works on Shire infrastructure to meet current and future needs and
- Recognise and plan to meet needs of target groups (these being) youth, aged, family and children, and disabled.” (ibid; pa 10-11)

It is considered the above elements of the adopted Council Plan provide a very clear direction for determining need and optimum strategic direction for the planned provision of social infrastructure for the Shire’s two main townships of Ballan and Bacchus Marsh.

### **2.3 Moorabool Shire Council Social Development Plan (2002)**

Council’s Social Development Plan (SDP) was produced via an extensive community consultation process throughout 2001 and, as a result, identified five key themes or areas of social infrastructure provision considered by the community as the top priorities for action. These were:

- **Public Environments** – e.g. improving the quality of space available for passive recreation;
- **Building Community Capacity** – e.g. enhance capacity of community organisations;
- **Community Facilities** – e.g. gaps in provision for youth, arts and culture, need a larger venue;
- **Service Provision** – e.g. supply gaps in child care, residential care, crisis intervention;
- **Leadership and Change** – need for a planning framework to support social well-being.

The first four themes provide a clear direction regarding how social infrastructure provision in the shire of Moorabool needs to be improved, whereas the last of the five reflects the community support for the formulation and implementation of a Social Infrastructure Plan, as distinct from corporate and legislative support for preparing such a document.

Section 4 of the SDP, commencing on page 12, provides a more detailed illustration of each of the above five themes, while sections 5 and 7 outline the required commitment to social well being and identifies a number of “social development priorities” respectively, With regard to the former, five “planning principles for the future” were recommended and have been adopted by Council to guide future social infrastructure provision.

These planning principles were as follows:



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- **Informed planning** – that Council will ensure an integrated and holistic approach to social development ...based on accurate research and information;
- **Responsive planning** – that Council will facilitate the planning process and engage local communities in identifying needs and priorities;
- **Leadership and vision in planning** – that Council will enact its leadership and governance roles with regard to sustaining community well being;
- **Planning for diversity** – that Council will actively support lifestyle choice through the provision of flexible community infrastructure in relation to specific life cycle needs;
- **Planning for equitable access** – that Council will facilitate equitable access to services and facilities by recognising the barriers that can result in social disadvantage.

Again, building on the guidance provided by the Council Plan 2005-2009, the above planning principles provide clear guidance for determining future social infrastructure requirements for Ballan and Bacchus Marsh.

However, section 6 of the Social Development Plan also provides more detailed guidance, in the form of “planning targets”, as to what might be acceptable and sustainable levels of social infrastructure provision within Moorabool Shire. These planning targets were based on “what is considered to be a sustainable level of service and provision within the local context” (refer pa16) however the SDP also acknowledges the inadequacy of attempting to apply population thresholds to assessment of need for particular services and facilities, given the failure of this approach to account for geographic or socio-economic variations, as discussed in section 1.4 of this report. Nevertheless, the comments made in section 6.1 of the SDP are a further valuable guide in ultimately determining the contents of a Social Infrastructure Plan for Bacchus Marsh and Ballan.



## **2.4 Moorabool Health and Well-being Strategy 2003-2006**

This strategy was prepared in 2003 and again included an extensive consultation process that included input from both local residents and service providers. The resultant strategy provides something of an updated assessment of local community need, compared to the Social Development Plan, and identifies the priority issues that need to be addressed to safeguard and improve well-being for those living within the Moorabool Shire, these being:

- The need to provide supportive economic and social conditions;
- The need to ensure a safe physical environment, particularly pedestrian, cycle and traffic flows;
- The need to foster strong social support networks, for example, particularly for the frail aged and people with disabilities;
- The need to foster supportive family structures, particularly with regard to families' ability to cope with increasing pressures from stress, drug problems, depression, lack of provision or access to support services and lack of public transport;
- Fostering participation in civic activities and social engagement generally;
- The need to improve provision of preventative services;
- Improving access to primary health services for those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD);
- The need to foster mental health;
- The need to provide better pedestrian and cycle trail linkages;
- The need to reduce incidence of injuries associated with cycling and young motorists;
- To foster decreased use of tobacco and drugs and promote regular physical activity.

In response to these identified issues, the Health and Well-being Strategy includes an Action Plan that includes recommended strategic actions in response to the specific issue at hand, designates agency or Council departmental responsibility, timelines and targeted outcomes.