Yarra
Ranges
Council

Warburton
Place Plan

November 2021

Mount Donna Buang soars over the township to the north and Mount Little Joe rises up to the south.

La La Falls cascade down towards the Yarra River which meanders into town from the distant reaches of the Yarra Ranges National Park.

Structured as two discrete centres that are 300m apart, Warburton is connected by the Yarra River, with Dammans Road winding along on the north bank and the Warburton Highway along the south.

It services the Warburton community as well as the surrounding communities of Wesburn, Millgrove, East Warburton and Big Pats Creek.
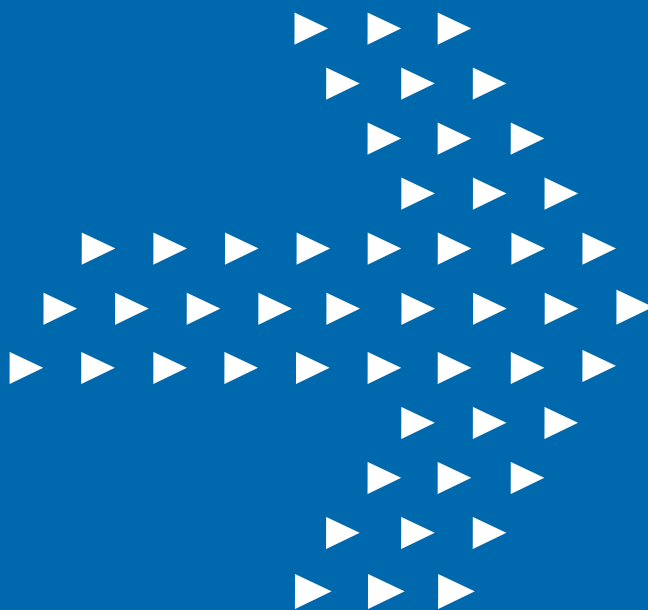
Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri People as the custodians of this land.

We also pay respect to all Aboriginal community elders, past and present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the history of this region.

Executive Summary

Warburton is a strikingly beautiful village-feel township that is home to a diverse, resilient and creative community as well as becoming an increasingly popular destination for tourists. A unifying vision is needed to guide future planning to protect and enrich the character as major projects and changing demands on the community continue to shape the township.

The Warburton community have outlined their vision and values through an extensive community engagement process during late 2018 and early 2019. The findings were summarised as an Engagement and Direction paper which was published in October 2019.

The COVID-19 global pandemic disrupted progress throughout 2020, however an additional engagement period was undertaken between July and August 2021. The Warburton Place Plan now documents the outcomes and actions to deliver on the vision.

Executive Summary

The key issues and directions from the Place Plan are summarised below:

	PRINCIPLE A: Culture, community & service needs	PRINCIPLE B: Economic prosperity & wellbeing	PRINCIPLE C: Integrated movement & spatial networks	PRINCIPLE D: Future-oriented land use & development	PRINCIPLE E: Leadership & governance
Issues for consideration	▸ Places to gather ▸ A connected town ▸ An ageing population and services to support aging in place	▸ Lack of local employment and training opportunities ▸ Safety in public places ▸ Strengthening tourism ▸ New regional attractions	▸ More diverse transport options ▸ Pedestrian connections ▸ Improved traffic and parking ▸ Ageing infrastructure	▸ Creative spaces, co-working spaces, creative education. ▸ Keeping green spaces ▸ Fire risk ▸ Protect village character	▸ Strengthening township leadership in decisions ▸ Making the most of new investment
Aspirations for the future	▸ Enhanced town character ▸ Celebration of history and community ▸ Connection to Indigenous culture today and its history ▸ Events capability improved	▸ Housing choice and affordability ▸ More community oriented activity and stronger sense of place ▸ Increased local employment ▸ Tourism managed and balanced with community needs	▸ Innovative transport solutions ▸ Connected township with improved walkability ▸ Increased accessibility throughout and between the centres	▸ Activation of dormant sites, and investment in heritage assets ▸ Development in harmony with environment ▸ New development and open spaces that celebrate the Yarra River	▸ Advocacy on key transport, development and environmental issues ▸ Make decisions with impact ▸ Communicate better ▸ Best Practice Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD

An Urban Design Framework (UDF) will immediately follow this Place Plan to create a design for the centre and deliverable projects

A Vision for Warburton

Nestled deep in a narrow gorge of the Yarra River, Warburton has become a renowned community of arts, culture and environment supporting flourishing local employment and celebrating its diversity.

The Yarra, from its catchment at Upper Yarra's mountainous source, has become a focal point for activity through a series of spaces that connect people to the Indigenous roots of the area and offer relaxing leisure and recreation along its banks.

The village-feel streets of Warburton are bustling with rows of thriving local businesses that have embraced the views so that patrons can connect with the tranquillity of the river, which winds to the bustling CBD of Melbourne supplying fresh water and much needed habitat.

The restored bridges feed into a network of walking trails that immerse people in the rich natural environment, and the Warburton Rail Trail leads avid cyclists and walkers from as far away as Lilydale to rest and restore beneath the majestic Mount Donna Buang.

Much-loved Heritage places have come to life once more, bringing vibrancy, employment and a renewed character. Careful planning has united the two centres and enabled appropriate housing to support the local community. Major tourist and regional events such as the renowned Warburton Mountain Bike Destination are balanced carefully with the natural environs and local community needs.

While the risk of fire is ever present, the community have galvanised to develop a safety plan in partnership with local authorities, bringing reassurance and a sense of connectedness.

Families are increasing in the community as young people are attracted to exciting careers in new industries, and through collaborative planning the timber industry has transitioned to full sustainable employment in diverse opportunities that have emerged. People of all abilities can now access the parks and spaces around Warburton, and through innovative new technologies everyone can access services and transport to support the breadth of lifestyle needs.

The beauty and character of Warburton that is loved by the community has been preserved as it has grown and evolved to become a truly wonderful destination in Melbourne.
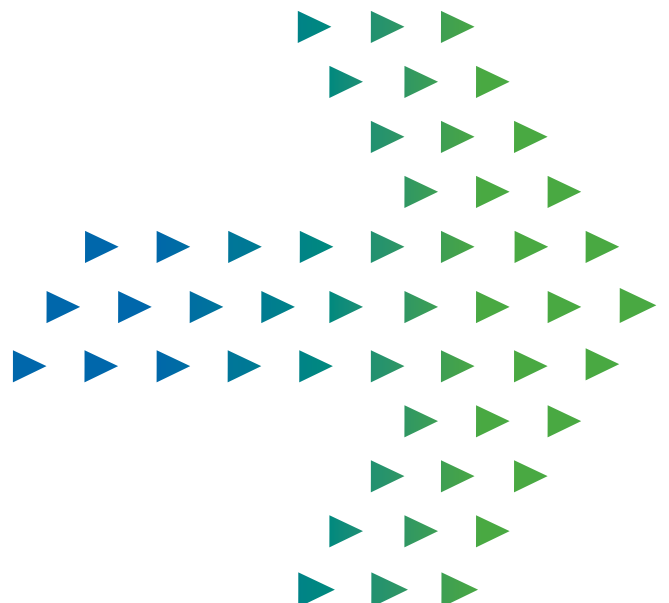
1. What is a Place Plan?

Through meaningful community engagement and rigorous research Place Plans establish Council's strategic intent for a place over 20 years or more, based on five overarching principles.

A

PRINCIPLE A: Culture, community & service needs

What is the current population telling us about this township?

Appropriate policies, support services and resources are based on a clear understanding of the community's aspirations, needs and culture.

B

PRINCIPLE B: Economic prosperity & wellbeing

How can we improve resilience and help a township flourish through changes occurring on a global scale?

Collaborations and partnerships are built on connections to place which creates shared value and a thriving and resilient community, delivering maximum impact for economic, physical and environmental wellbeing.

C

PRINCIPLE C: Integrated movement & spatial networks

How can we best use common land in our townships?

Well-structured and welcoming public spaces integrate multiple functions, such as public transport and active transport, recreation and conservation areas, vibrant and attractive streets and meeting places.

D

PRINCIPLE D: Future-oriented land use & development

How will townships in Yarra Ranges respond as Melbourne develops?

Policy, planning and investment attraction help guide development and use of private land and buildings in order to support public and social activity.

E

PRINCIPLE E: Leadership & governance

How will we sustain and manage Council and community effort?

Planning for place and making those plans a reality involves many different parties and processes. Ongoing management is required to implement actions and evaluate their effectiveness once completed.

This Warburton Place Plan:

▶ articulates a shared vision

▶ describes the issues and opportunities for Warburton, and Council's strategic intent

▶ creates a foundation for substantial design plans such as an Urban Design Framework and detailed Masterplans, to enable projects to be delivered

▶ identifies simple quick-win projects

▶ provides an evidence-based advocacy platform for Government and investment.

2. Why a Place Plan for Warburton?

The Yarra Ranges Council vision statement for the entire municipality states:

"Whether you live here or visit, you will see how much we care for Country, how inclusive and connected our communities are, and how sustainable balanced growth makes this the best place in the world."

Yarra Ranges Community Vision 2036

The Warburton Place Plan takes the first step towards realising this vision in Warburton. It will help guide decisions about Warburton, lay the foundations for design, capture the values and qualities of the place, and direct investment for the township.

Warburton is a strikingly beautiful township that is home to a diverse, resilient and creative community as well as becoming an increasingly popular destination for tourists.

Building on the communities' strong foundations, several large developments are set to shape the Warburton community in coming years, such as the reactivation of prominent vacant sites, the Warburton Mountain Bike Destination, Warburton Water World and the Warburton Recreation Reserve. In addition, major changes are occurring within the Timber Industry which will require a coordinated response to sustain employment and livelihoods of the community.

The Place Plan articulates clearly the unique character and attributes of the centre that must be at the heart of all projects. It lays out a coordinated approach across different programs of work, and forms the foundation for substantial design through a subsequent Urban Design Framework, focused Masterplans and discrete projects, along with prioritisation of annual roads, footpaths and community infrastructure works.

Importantly, it seeks to give confidence that the values and character of Warburton are understood, and will be enriched as the place evolves and changes over time.

3. What is the Strategic context for the Place Plan?

The Warburton Place Plan will complement existing Planning Scheme controls that form the basis of any decisions made regarding development within Warburton.

The Municipal Planning Strategy identifies Warburton as a Small Neighbourhood Activity Centre, which is reflected in the 2012 Activity Centre Network Strategy. This positions it to have a catchment for immediate surrounding communities and some tourism role.

In addition, the existing Design Development Overlay 12 (DDO12) outlines guidelines and requirements for built form and township character within Warburton and strongly aligns with the recommendations of the Place Plan objectives and outcomes.

The principles and guidelines in Vision 2020 By Design, which are the foundations of the DDO12, are also clearly aligned with the actions and recommendations in the Warburton Place Plan.

The Place Plan seeks to focus consideration of future changes to the Planning Scheme to facilitate employment in a changing economy, strengthen the character of the centre, support housing, adapt to growth, respond to emerging pressures and attract investment.
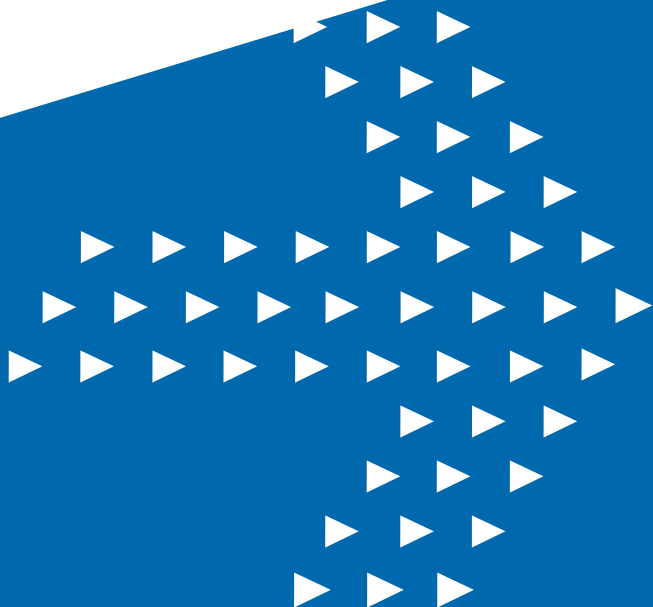
4. How was the community involved in the Warburton Place Plan?

From December 2018 to May 2019 Yarra Ranges Council delivered a broad ranging community engagement through surveys, workshops, pop-up stalls, social media and other community events to ensure that opportunities were available to community irrespective of age, gender, social status or affiliations.

More than 400 people engaged with the process, with engagement undertaken at community events such as the Warburton Summer Produce Market, Makers Market, community cricket match, the River Folk Festival, community meetings, Redwood Community Centre and Community Emergency Management Plan engagement session.

Three workshops were facilitated identifying early actions that key stakeholders, including Council, local community and traders could implement now and any other next steps going forward. The sessions were framed around three key issues:

▶ land use, environment and infrastructure

▶ local and regional economy

▶ society, culture and identity

An online survey from December 2018 to April 2019, promoted through social media and local media, provided further opportunity for residents and visitors to share their thoughts about Warburton and its future. Informal drop-in sessions throughout March and April 2019 also enabled residents to chat about issues and share feedback.

An Engagement and Directions Paper was published in October 2019 providing an initial summary of findings.

Progress on development of the Place Plan was disrupted in 2020 by the advent of the COVID-19 global pandemic which resulted in a redirection of resources to enable Council to support the community for the immediate health priorities. With loosening of restrictions the Place Plan development was able recommence in early 2021.

An additional community consultation was convened between July and August 2021 utilising a wide range of formats in order to maximise reach and focus on local contribution. As part of this consultation a letter was mailed out to 3,750 households in the Warburton and surrounding area informing the community of the exhibition process. Drop In Sessions were organised to be held and a dedicated web page for the exhibition of the plan, provided a digital platform to capture feedback. A webinar was conducted to allow members of the community that could not attend a Drop In Session an additional format to gain information, and two forums with key stakeholders including business and community groups were also undertaken.
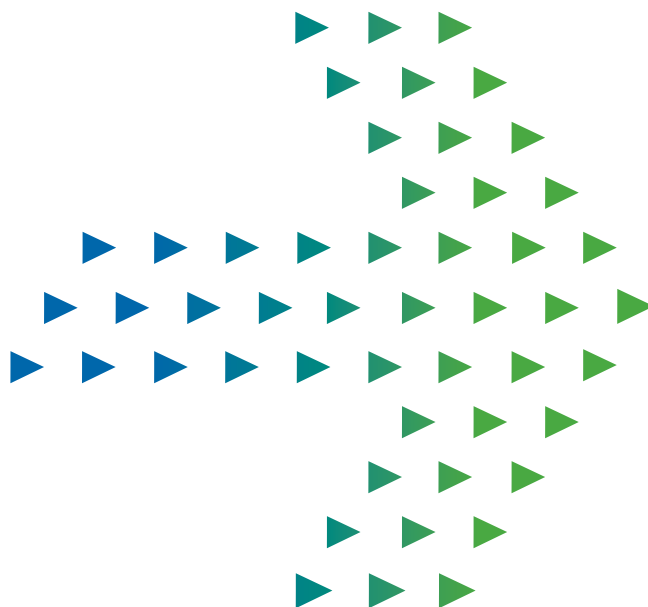
5. What did the community tell us?

The community have expressed a passion for their township, and are striving to balance the need for local employment and a thriving centre against the negative impacts of peak tourism and threats to the natural values of the area.

The following recurring themes were highlighted during community engagement:

► The natural environment, in particular the river and forests, as a place for community to gather, and their need for protection and restoration

► A connected and inclusive community, with access to services and opportunities

► Strong local economy that adapts to changing industries, leverages local strengths, skills and dormant sites

► Affordable housing, and the desire to age in place

► Increased knowledge and celebration of people, culture and place, with an emphasis on Indigenous acknowledgment

► Access and movement, improved pedestrian access in and around town

► Protecting the village-feel of Warburton, while addressing orderly traffic management, peak parking impacts, and exploring innovative transport solutions

► Emergency management, bushfire preparedness, infrastructure and information

► Welcoming and accessible public spaces, with safe and vibrant places to gather

► Better communication from Council and other levels of government

A detailed overview of Warburton and the issues and opportunities identified through research and consultation are in **Appendix A: Warburton Snapshot**.

5. What did the community tell us?

The top five priority areas are outlined in the following table.

	What is important from the Research?	What have we learnt from Community?	What will Council do? *Directions*	What will this deliver? *Benefits*	What is influential? *Principles*
1	**Transitioning and growing local jobs and supporting businesses**	Make the most of future increases in tourist visitation and to maximise local employment, while ensuring the town keeps its village atmosphere. Reactivate dormant sites to alleviate housing pressures and create a more diverse economy. Timber industry transition remains a regional issue with consultation indicating that it is not specific to just Warburton.	Focus on the long term sustainability of tourism through emphasising place-centric authenticity, local history, values and character. Diversify employment through investment in existing assets and vacant sites. Enhance community pride and ownership, and create a unified strategy for the transition of the timber industry to create a vision of the future.	Warburton's people will have increased opportunities to prosper as the town grows with a more diverse and robust economy.	▶ Economic prosperity and well being ▶ Future orientated land use ▶ Leadership and governance.
2	**People, Culture and Community wellbeing**	Concerns have been raised that Airbnb is depleting housing supply and choice. Community expressed a strong desire to preserve the intangible and tangible heritage of Warburton including Aboriginal cultural heritage. Services are lacking and access is difficult.	Advocate for investment in affordable housing. Adopt the Indigenous Design Charter to engage on projects. Advocate for improved service delivery and community support.	A diverse, connected, supported and active Warburton with increased housing choice and access.	▶ Economic prosperity and well being ▶ Future orientated land use ▶ Leadership and governance.

	What is important from the Research?	What have we learnt from Community?	What will Council do? *Directions*	What will this deliver? *Benefits*	What is influential? *Principles*
3	**Character, place and inclusion**	Locals are seeking more vibrant and accessible public places that support performance, events, and initiatives for young people, winter and night activities. Concern that the unique character of the streetscape and village-feel will be overwhelmed by tourism.	Develop and Urban Design Framework to document and protect the towns' character while providing design solutions to the pressures in the centre. Raise the profile of highly valued natural assets to be accessible and well managed.	Integrated and highly accessible services and spaces that support good health, access to the natural environment, social care and connectedness.	▶ Culture, community and service needs ▶ Future orientated land use.
4	**Environment and sustainability**	Community highly values the ecological and habitat quality of the forests and rivers around Warburton. Concern this will be impacted by development and increased patronage to the townships. Concern with damage from pest species of flora and fauna.	Sensitive Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) principles applied to all projects with an emphasis on protecting water quality and habitat values. Control and reduction of pest species as well as advocacy for rehabilitation.	A strong connection with nature and confidence that it has been protected. Warburton town centre retains its beautiful spaces and streets leading to a greater sense of community, safety, and pride.	▶ Integrated movement and spatial networks ▶ Future orientated land use.
5	**Parking, traffic and transport solutions**	There are management, signage and accessibility of parking issues in the area, as well as concern that the infrastructure of the town will be unable to meet growing visitor demand in future years. Particular concern with traffic movement during emergencies and peak tourism events.	Undertake an evaluation of car parking in Warburton. This includes an assessment of current parking occupancy and travel behaviours, investigation of opportunities to reduce demand and improve utilisation of existing parking assets. Improve wayfinding signage and place markers. Investigate local transport solutions to management movement at critical times.	An easier and safer town to get around with quality roads and public transport infrastructure.	▶ Integrated movement and spatial networks ▶ Future orientated land use.

6. A Plan for Action

Priority 1 – Transitioning and Growing Local Jobs and Supporting businesses

Action 1.1 – Major developments

Investigate design solutions that facilitate a balanced and integrated approach to delivery of major projects including supporting infrastructure, accommodation and services.

Coordinate all projects within Warburton through an integrated Governance model and clear centralised communication and engagement with community.

Action 1.2 – Investment attraction program

Deliver an investment attraction program consistent with Warburton's assets and culture and one that embraces future opportunities. Encourage businesses and events which showcase recreation, the environment and the significant local arts and culture offerings including our rich Indigenous culture.

Action 1.3 – Workforce readiness

Partner with the business community, schools, education providers and support services to offer integrated learning, training and employment pathways for emerging opportunities. Foster new employment opportunities for young people in nature-based tourism and hospitality and encourage a culture of entrepreneurship.

Action 1.4 – Timber Industry transition

Partner with State Government, businesses, community and new industries to assist in facilitating the transition of the Timber Industry by 2030 through new and relevant industries.

Benefits

► Supports strong sectors of the economy and promotes business growth

► Increases diversity and number of local employment opportunities

► Builds the confidence of future generations to prosper in Warburton

► Supports a more diverse and resilient economy and community

► Fosters more equitable distribution of the potential benefits from increased tourism

► Provides a destination that grows the local economy.

Priority 2 – People, Culture and Community Wellbeing

Action 2.1 – Indigenous Cultural Heritage

Apply the principles of the Indigenous Design Charter to engage with Indigenous communities to develop and co-design projects that recognise the Indigenous cultural heritage and offer a contemporary Connection to Country.

Action 2.2 – Advocacy

Develop an Advocacy package that targets funding opportunities to address gaps in service provisions and builds community capacity in areas of conservation and river health.

Action 2.3 – Housing

Explore opportunities to improve housing diversity, availability and affordability, along with relevant advocacy options and recommended changes to Planning Scheme controls.

Action 2.4 – Mobile phone and internet

Advocate for improved mobile phone reception and internet access to support safety plans in emergencies and maximise access to education and employment through remote online portals.

Action 2.5 – Events Strategy

Develop an Events Strategy that outlines the infrastructure and operational requirements to deliver successful events that can be enjoyed by the community and visitors.

Benefits

► Improves health and wellbeing, a sense of belonging, and ageing in place

► Respects, values and integrates Indigenous culture

► Delivers more diverse and affordable housing options to suit diverse needs and ageing in place

► Increases day and night-time street activity in the town centre

► Improves perception of Warburton as a vibrant and safe place to live

► Ensures those who need support can access it when required.

6. A Plan for Action

Priority 3 – Character, Place and Inclusion

Action 3.1 – Urban Design Framework

Produce an Urban Design Framework along with a suite of projects, translating the Place Plan into design solutions through strong community engagement, addressing the key issues and focussing on Warburton's unique culture, environment and opportunities.

Include design guidelines for built form and streetscapes that protect the character of the townships and can be translated into Planning Scheme controls and updates to Design Development Overlay 12.

Action 3.2 – Universal Design

Carry out an assessment of accessibility barriers throughout the centres, and integrate design solutions into all open space and public realm projects for delivery.

Action 3.3 – Heritage

Identify all significant Heritage sites within Warburton and surrounding areas, and prepare for inclusion in any Heritage controls.

Develop an creative and immersive strategy to celebrate the story of Warburton.

Develop a Prospectus to support investment in vacant strategic heritage sites to facilitate their restoration and activation as incubators, creative industries, corporate training or education operations and events.

Action 3.4 – Yarra River

Strengthen the role of the Yarra River through implementing additional nodes of connection and access in partnership with Melbourne Water.

Advocate for upgrades and restoration of existing bridge infrastructure.

Benefits

► Protect and enrich the character of Warburton

► Improved public places that provide a platform for greater connection, participation and activation

► Enhanced sense of safety and community connection, belonging and pride

► Enhances Warburton's public places and provides opportunities for cultural expression

► Makes better use of existing infrastructure and amenities.

Priority 4 – Environment and Sustainability

Action 4.1 – Resilient renewable energy

Explore renewable energy solutions and micro grid options that will increase the reliability and resilience of the local energy grid.

Action 4.2 – Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD)

Apply Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) principles to all projects, with an emphasis on Water Sensitive Urban Design to remove pollutants prior to the Yarra River and reduce runoff from road surfaces

Action 4.3 – Waste management

Develop a Waste Management Strategy to address peak waste arising from events and tourism, and produce sustainable local solutions that reduce waste.

Action 4.4 – Natural Environment

Raise public awareness of habitat values and the importance of waterways, and partner with local community groups to develop environmental education.

Advocate to Parks Victoria regarding control and reduction of pest species, including fauna and flora, and rehabilitation.

Action 4.5 – Emergency Safety Plan

Facilitate a coordinated community and agencies safety plan for emergencies and peak fire risk periods.

Benefits

▸ Protects and enhances the natural environment

▸ Generates awareness and increased knowledge to maximise care of our environment

▸ Develops education, skills training and employment pathways

▸ Provides reassurance in times of emergency.

Priority 5 – Parking, Traffic and Transport solutions

Action 5.1 – Parking solutions

Develop a Warburton Parking and Traffic Strategy that identifies parking solutions for peak periods that do not erode the character of the townships, and a program of short, medium and long term projects for delivery.

Action 5.2 – Cycling and Pedestrians

Create safe crossings and supporting infrastructure at key nodes of pedestrian and cycle trails to maximise active transport.

Identify and deliver missing connections in the pedestrian network.

Create discrete and appropriate supporting infrastructure for cyclists, designed to maximise use and preserve streetscape amenity.

Action 5.3 – Traffic Movement and Innovation

Produce a local transport solution to alleviate traffic pressure during events, emergencies and peak tourism periods, including network and connections options.

Partner with Department of Transport to develop innovative solutions that increase local access to and frequency of public transport, possibly through Smart Cities strategies.

Action 5.4 – Wayfinding signage

Reduce excessive and unpredictable vehicle movements through clear wayfinding signage and place identification, with a complementary pedestrian signage suite to support walking.

Benefits

▸ Increases walking and driver safety, reduces car-dependence and congestion

▸ Supports positive travel experiences for visitors and locals

▸ Improves accessibility for people who don't or can't drive

▸ Contributes to a township that is safe and liveable

▸ Encourage active transport and walkability

▸ Improves appearance of streetscapes while protecting heritage areas.

7. Bringing the Place Plan to life

As a 20 year plan, the actions signal strategic intent for Warburton and surrounds.

These key next steps will ensure the Place Plan progresses towards the delivery of real projects and community outcomes:

1 **Adoption**

Warburton Place Plan adopted by Council, and aligned to delivery of key strategies Actions included in Council's annual Corporate Action Plan.

2 **Urban Design Framework**

An Urban Design Framework to be developed to translate the principles into actual designs and projects prepared for delivery.

3 **Quick wins**

Solutions that can be readily delivered will be designed and costed in order to seek funding for construction.

4 **Annual Action Plan**

The Actions will be integrated into Council's annual business and project planning with specific actions allocated to departments and teams for delivery.

5 **Reporting**

Progress on actions and projects reported annually. Performance and monitoring publicly available through Council's on-line presence.

6 **Review**

The Warburton Place Plan will be reviewed and evaluated over time to ensure it is current, relevant and adapted to any changes that have arisen.

8. How will we measure progress?

Progress will include completion of physical works and positive outcomes for the Warburton community, the town and natural environment. Re-collecting data once the place plan is under way will tell us what has been done and how effective the actions have been.
This is currently planned for 2024.

Measuring changes in built environment and community perception

► Conduct a *Place Score Assessment* for Warburton with follow up assessment every five years.

Measuring changes in economic performance

► Compare local economic profile to baseline data

► Targets

– Increased skilled employment in high-value industry sectors

– Increased amounts of new public and private investment.

Measuring changes in social environment

► Compare measures of community activity with baseline

► Targets

– Increased number of social housing units in response to need.

Measuring changes in cultural environment

► Compare expressions of cultural identity with baseline data

► Targets

– New community-driven event or festival unique to Warburton

– Increased attendance by under 35s at Warburton events.

Measuring changes in transport networks and environment

► Compare use of public and active transport with baseline data

► Targets

– 20 per cent increase in the number of people walking past the same Place Score Assessment locations after major capital works are completed

– 10 per cent increase in the number of people using public transport in Warburton.

Appendix A: Warburton Snapshot

The following overview of Warburton has been arranged around the five Principles of Place (see section 1. What is a Place Plan?)

Culture, community and service needs

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY

The overall number of residents remains static (just more than 5,000 people in Warburton and surrounds) although there has been an increase in older residents (Warburton's median age is 48 years, 12 years greater than the Greater Melbourne median age of 36)

48
MEDIAN AGE

Inclusion of people with a disability in all aspects of life – including physical accessibility – is critically important. Millgrove, East Warburton and surrounds has the highest level of disability support pensioners in Yarra Ranges (7.5 per cent)

7.5%

LESS DIVERSE

Warburton is less culturally diverse than other areas of the Yarra Ranges and Greater Melbourne; the majority of residents (85.4 per cent) speak only English at home

Within Yarra Ranges, the locality with the highest rates of psychological/psychiatric disability support pension recipients were in Warburton's 3799 postcode area (27.5 per 1000 residents)

Concern regarding the elderly population; ageing in place and a lack of activities, services, access and mobility for elderly residents is an issue
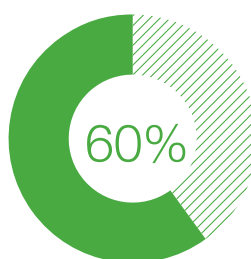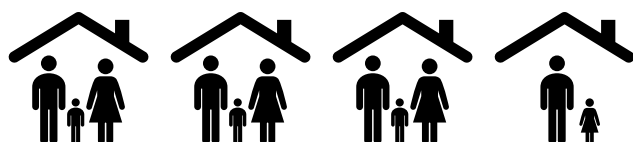
Similarly is the limited opportunities for young people; lack of activities, lack of transport, safety and lack of employment and training opportunities

HOUSEHOLD TYPE AND INCOME

A high proportion of Warburton households are families with children 60 per cent, single parent household make up around 25 per cent

60%

The proportion of unoccupied dwellings in Warburton at last census was 19 per cent, compared to Yarra Ranges 8 per cent

19%

A high proportion of Warburton households earn a lower than average income; the median income for workers in Warburton Township is $725 per week and the median household income is approximate $950 per week

In Warburton and surrounds, 72 per cent of households were purchasing or fully owned their home, 15.4 per cent were renting privately, and 0.4 per cent were in social housing in 2016 (below the Victorian average of around 3 per cent)

SOCIAL ISSUES AND SERVICE PROVISION

Difficulties in the sustainability of services exist, given the generally small number of service users

SUSTAINABILITY

Social isolation, inadequate services based locally, housing affordability, financial hardships and lack of meaningful diverse employment opportunities impact on families, young people and children

IMPACT ON FAMILIES, YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILDREN

Declining numbers of families with children impacts on the future demands for education services specifically early childhood education, care services and primary schools

DECLINING NUMBERS OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

HERITAGE AND CHARACTER

The promotion and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage is prominent in the minds of the Warburton community. Strong desire to preserve the intangible and tangible heritage of the area and retain its unique character.
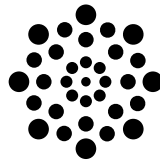
PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

Protection and preservation of the main street including heritage buildings and awnings, river facing terraces and tenancy by appropriate localised

OPPORTUNITIES TO TELL HERITAGE STORIES TO SHAPE PLACE

There are increasing opportunities to tell Heritage (Indigenous and European) stories to shape place

Appendix A: Warburton Snapshot

Economic prosperity and wellbeing

JOBS, BUSINESS SECTORS AND TRAINING

Warburton's employment and training opportunities are changing. The announcement that native forest timber harvesting will end by 2030 and that supply to timber mills will be substantially reduced from 2024 will impact the Warburton community.
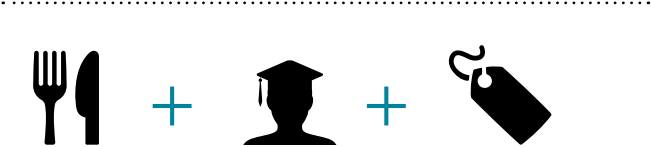
2030

Approximately 250 businesses operate in the Warburton area employing 744 people and generating ~$180 million

~$180 MILLION

Key industry sectors are service industries such as 'Accommodation & Food Services' (144 jobs), 'Education & Training' (104 jobs) and 'Retail Trade' (87 jobs)

New approaches needed in high-value industries as traditional employers transition to new technology or are withdrawn

NEW APPROACHES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS

CAPITAL AND CUSTOMERS

Sustaining business operations is an issue as capital and customers diminish

The Warburton Mountain Bike Destination (WMBD) and associated development is a major opportunity for Warburton's economic development. WMBD is expected to create 122 new local jobs and generate about $20.4 million in economic spend within the region each year.
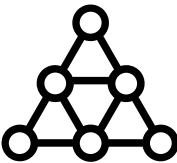
MAJOR OPPORTUNITY

Tourism with low-carbon and sustainability focus can support conservation of the natural environment

There are many unique assets from creativity, recreation and culture that could be developed

Emphasis on the history of the area through bush walking, nature-based tourism, and markets will benefit from increased tourism

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Housing is becoming less affordable. There is a perception that home sharing platforms such as Airbnb are in part to blame.
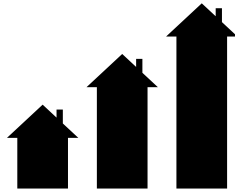
The Upper Yarra Valley has a relatively high level of households in mortgage stress (20.8 per cent)

20.8% IN MORTGAGE STRESS

For households on incomes of $50,000, almost everywhere in Greater Melbourne is unaffordable; only Warburton and one postcode in Melbourne's north rank as only moderately unaffordable. And everywhere is extremely unaffordable for people on benefits.

RANK AS ONLY MODERATELY AFFORDABLE

Appendix A: Warburton Snapshot

## Integrated movement and spatial networks

ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

Bridges across the Yarra River are ageing and in need of repairs

3% Only 3 per cent of residents take public transport to work, compared to 6 per cent Yarra Ranges average

Pedestrian routes connecting to destinations outside the core are indirect and discontinuous, including towards the golf club and accommodation areas to the north and west of the Warburton Township
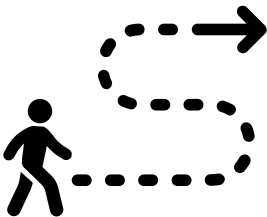
LIMITED PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Limited public transport service provision creates difficulty in accessing nearby townships, as well as infrequency of bus services and no bike racks on buses

DIVERSE

Footpaths linking the different sides of the town, public transport, lighting around town, walkability, car tourism, transport management, connectivity and disability access need improvement

Warburton's single main road access point is constraining especially in relation to emergencies

Some sections of footpath are too narrow to allow wheelchairs or prams to pass one another, including along Warburton Highway between the two commercial areas of Warburton
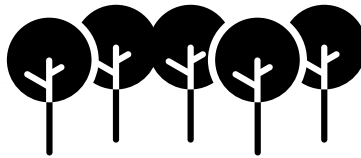
PUBLIC SPACE ACTIVATION

More public amenities needed including public toilets, playgrounds, bins and drinking water

Safety an issue for some, particularly lighting, passive surveillance and places to 'hang out' (at night)

Warburton's open space areas reviewed and redesigned to increase usability and functionality of these spaces

+ ADDITIONAL PUBLIC SPACES

Additional public spaces that interact with the river will alleviate the congestion occurring around Thomas Avenue

The Village town character and environment are important. Improvement of streetscape to include public art, street furniture, amenities and footpaths
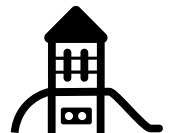
New performance spaces, events, and initiatives for young people and to promote Warburton to the wider Melbourne area including the infrastructure to support

Town centre to embrace the river by celebrating and enhancing the space and elements that interface with this significant natural feature

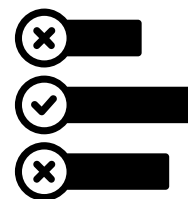Community is seeking more vibrant public places

VIBRANT

PARKING

Peak tourism throughout COVID and continuing since then has resulted in congestion and unsafe parking, however these peaks are for weekends and holidays and the remainder of the time it can be very quiet

Management, signage and accessibility of parking are issues in the area

AMPLE PARKING

A recent survey indicates that there is ample parking in the township (however it is located away from the Main Street and is not as well known, so therefore underutilised). There are other parking opportunities further away from the township that, with effective connectivity, could help to spread demand.

In 1990, issues regarding parking and traffic more broadly were noted in the Warburton Township Study, however this has deteriorated further with the increased popularity across Melbourne for key destinations

INFRASTRUCTURE

There is concern that the infrastructure of the town will not meet growing visitor demand in future years

Appendix A: Warburton Snapshot

## Future oriented land use and development

SITE ACTIVATION

There are dormant sites and undeveloped Special Use Zone sites in Warburton that if activated would bring economy, energy and improved access to services

KEY DRIVER

There are limitations to what government can do with these privately held sites; however the Mountain Bike project is a key driver in improving conditions
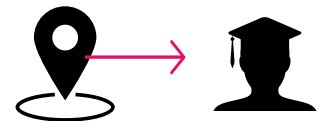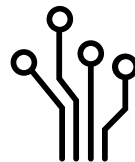
Community want dormant sites in town reactivated with productive activity focussing on creative/ performance spaces, co-working spaces, TAFE and creative education

COUNCIL ASSETS

Recreation reserves and other green spaces maintained by Council will be used for an increasing number of activities and events

NEW TECHNOLOGIES

New technologies, systems and practices will be embedded in infrastructure such as roads and drainage
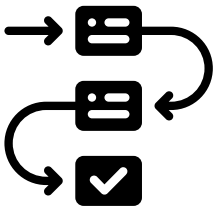
Appendix A: Warburton Snapshot

Leadership and governance

NEW INVESTMENT AND ADVOCACY

WARBURTON TOWNSHIP

Improving and maintaining Warburton Township will require asset management, service planning and funding strategies

Council will invest in Warburton to ensure liveability for its community and infrastructure to support growing numbers of visitors

Exploring new models that enable the community to experience optimum health and wellbeing

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The natural environment of Warburton and surrounds is a highly prized asset for the municipality and the broader population
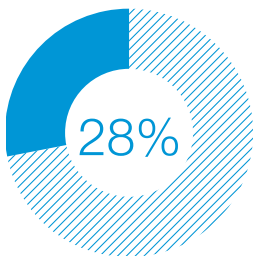
Warburton's visitor number are expected to increase

Manage growth, encourage activation of dormant sites and advocate for the provision of services for community

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

28%

Bushfire risk is a real and ongoing concern for Warburton's residents, and one that will require ongoing risk management. The Warburton Valley bushfire catchment contains almost 28 per cent of the risk to life and property in our landscape (Strategic Bushfire Management Plan – East Central, 2015)

MOBILE RECEPTION

There are still some areas of minimal mobile reception (Big Pats Creek, East Warburton) to consider for SMS notification

ONE WARBURTON

+

Communication, coordination and partnership are integral to improving health and prosperity of Warburton's community