INTRODUCTION

What is the Hume Municipal Strategic Statement?

The Hume Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) is specifically aimed at providing the strategic direction for the physical, social, economic and environmental development of Hume City. It is to be read in conjunction with the Local Policies contained at Clause 22.

The MSS provides a vision for the City that is reflective of community aspirations, the Hume Corporate Plan 2004-2008, the Hume City Plan 2030 and existing and past strategies and policies. Of particular importance in the development of the MSS vision were the 1993 Bulla General and associated Strategy Plans.

The MSS focuses on land use and development strategies aimed at achieving the vision for the City. Together with the local policies, it underpins the planning tools (zones, overlays and local provisions) used in the Hume Planning Scheme. Members of the community, Council, business and the development community must take into account the vision, objectives and strategies of the MSS when considering planning scheme amendments and permit applications.

The MSS has an overall timeframe of 2011 however reviews will take place at least every three years.

Reference to 'City' in the MSS means Hume City.

State Policy Context

Melbourne 2030: Planning for Sustainable Growth is the State planning policy that guides the future development of metropolitan Melbourne to the year 2030. It identifies nine strategic directions that underpin a vision for Melbourne that provides for continued sustainable growth and the consolidation of Melbourne’s reputation as one of the most liveable, attractive and prosperous areas in the world for residents, business and visitors.

Some of the policy directions of particular relevance to Hume City include:

- Designation of the Hume corridor as one of five nominated urban growth corridors in metropolitan Melbourne.
- The introduction of an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) around metropolitan Hume and Sunbury.
- Identification and protection of rural areas in outer metropolitan municipalities as Melbourne’s ‘green wedges’.
- The designation of the Broadmeadows activity centre as one of Melbourne’s 26 Principal Activity Centres, and as a Transit City.

The Hume MSS aims to ensure that the strategic directions for the development and use of land in the City are consistent with the strategic directions and objectives of Melbourne 2030: Planning for Sustainable Growth and State planning policy generally.

Regional Context

Hume City is located about 20 kilometres north-west of the Melbourne City centre. It shares borders with the City of Whittlesea to the east, City of Moreland to the south, City of Brimbank to the southwest, Shire of Melton to the northwest, and the Shires of Macedon Ranges and Mitchell to the north.

The City covers an area of 504 square kilometres, extending approximately 21 kilometres in a north-south direction and 22 kilometres in an east-west direction. Despite its size, the majority of the City’s population reside in the easternmost third of the municipality or in Sunbury. There are a number of smaller townships and settlements located within the City.
however, which provide local services and facilities to surrounding rural areas and are important foci for community interaction.

The Hume Highway, Western Ring Road, and Calder and Tullamarine Freeways pass through the City, whilst the Craigieburn Bypass is scheduled for completion by the end of 2005, giving the City excellent access to the national freeway system, the principal seaports of Melbourne and Geelong, regional centres such as Bendigo and Ballarat, and the northern and western metropolitan area. The Melbourne-Sydney rail service passes through the eastern sector of the City and the Melbourne-Bendigo rail line passes through Sunbury.

The City encompasses the Melbourne Airport which, due to ownership by the Commonwealth Government, is excluded from the planning scheme. However, the transport and other impacts of the airport operations are of great significance to planning in the City. The Airport also contributes substantially to the local, regional, State and National economy.

The upper reaches of the Maribyrnong River and Merri and Moonee Ponds Creeks are located in the City and have regional environmental, recreation and heritage value. Other notable environmental, heritage and landscape features include the Organ Pipes National Park, Woodlands Historic Park, Cooper Street and Evans Street Grasslands, Rupertswood Mansion, Emu Bottom Homestead, ‘Glenara’ and five aboriginal ceremonial rings.

Hume City is located within the Greater Port Phillip and Land Protection region. 40% of the municipality is located in the catchment of the Yarra River and the remainder in the catchment of the Maribyrnong River. A small area west of Sunbury along the Calder Highway drains to the Werribee catchment. Land use and development within the municipality will significantly influence the health of both the Yarra River and the Maribyrnong River and their catchments.

Hume City is experiencing rapid development and population growth owing mainly to a supply of serviced and reasonably priced residential and industrial land. Some of the implications of rapid development in the region are: strong demand for State and Federal funding toward major infrastructure items to keep pace with population growth; increased competition for the attraction of major employers and industry; and changing land use patterns at municipal borders.
The City was formed in December 1994 by the amalgamation of the former Shire of Bulla with parts of the Cities of Broadmeadows, Keilor and Whittlesea. It is bordered by the Merri Creek to the east, Jacksons Creek, Gunns Gully Road and Deep Creek to the north, the Maribyrnong River and the Calder Highway to the west and the Western Ring Road to the south. Land uses within the City are extremely diverse and include established urban areas, areas committed for urban growth, industry, vast rural areas, and the Melbourne Airport.

Hume City extends from the metropolitan fringe areas of Broadmeadows and Greenvale, to the township of Sunbury and surrounding rural areas, and north beyond Craigieburn and Mickleham.

Physiography

The physiography of the City changes from east to west.

That part of the municipality east of Mickleham/Old Sydney Roads is contained within the Eastern Uplands physiographic region and is comprised of undulating volcanic plains that rise steadily northwards from Broadmeadows (lowland plains) to Craigieburn (upland plains).

The balance of the municipality is contained within the Western Volcanic Plains and is characterised by flat basaltic plains incised by the winding Jackson, Deep and Emu Creek valleys (that traverse the area in a north-south direction) and punctuated by low hills and depressions. Within this area remnants of volcanoes and other eruption points, such as Mt. Holden and Bald and Redstone Hills, are visible over the plains for many kilometres, providing landscape interest and orientation points.

Climate in the City is characterised by warm, dry summers and cool winters. Annual rainfall averages between 580-640 mm. The combined effects of dry summers and low winter temperatures confine the growing season to six months of the year with significant implications for agricultural activities.

Urban Areas

Hume City’s existing urban areas are located principally in the south-eastern corner of the City, and extend from the southern suburbs of Broadmeadows and Jacana, to Dallas, Coolaroo and Meadow Heights to the north, Campbellfield to the east, and Tullamarine, Gladstone Park, Westmeadows and Greenvale to the west. The combined population of these areas in 2005 was around 79,141 people.

Sunbury is the other major urban area in the City and is located approximately 15 kilometres northwest of Broadmeadows. In 2005 it had a population of approximately 32,739. Sunbury’s distance from the main metropolitan area, its location with the Jacksons Creek valley, and the rural surrounds, give it a distinct country town feel that is enhanced by the presence of streetscapes, landscapes and sites of heritage value. One of the challenges for Hume City is to achieve a balance between maximising Sunbury’s development potential and maintaining its distinctive rural landscape character and heritage.

The principal growth area is the Merri (Hume) Growth Corridor which is the area generally bounded by Somerton Road, Merri Creek, Mt. Ridley Road and Mickleham Road, comprising Roxburgh Park, Craigieburn and substantial tracts of undeveloped land around Craigieburn. Growth in this area is being driven by new residential development and new industrial development which predominates along the Hume Highway and adjacent to Melbourne Airport.
People

In 2005 the estimated population of Hume was approximately 154,473 people. Only 1.6% of the population live in rural areas of the City.

The City is one of the outer municipalities with growth rates consistently higher than the metropolitan average. However, in common with other outer municipalities the annual rate of growth is slowing; from 2.9% recorded in the 1999-2004 intercensal period to a forecast 1.7% by 2030. The estimated population in 2030 is 242,605, which represents an increase of approximately 88,000 residents over the 25 year period. Overall, 9,450 dwellings or 9.4% of outer Melbourne’s total forecast residential building activity over the next 10 years is expected in Hume.

The Merri (Hume) Growth Corridor and Sunbury will accommodate most new population growth over the next 25 years. When fully developed the Merri (Hume) Growth Corridor is expected to accommodate 80,000-90,000 persons while the ultimate population of Sunbury is estimated to be between 50,000-55,000. In contrast, the older established areas of the City are predicted to remain stable or decline in population over the next 25 years.

Rapid population growth necessitates that physical and social infrastructure such as roads and community facilities, be continually upgraded and improved to accommodate increased demands. The provision of cost effective infrastructure, and hence affordable development, is a major challenge facing Hume City now and in the future.

Hume City has a more youthful age structure than Melbourne as a whole, with a substantially larger proportion of the population under 18 years of age (in 2001, 31.1% in Hume compared with 23.7% for the whole of Melbourne), and a smaller proportion in the post retirement age. An aging of the population is expected however, which will have implications for future housing provision and planning for health services, leisure and transport.

The City is home to a culturally diverse community. Over a quarter of residents were born overseas and over a third of the population speak a language other than English at home. Hume residents also have a diverse range of religious beliefs and lifestyles.

Housing

The average household is projected to gradually decline in size over the next 25 years from the 3.2 persons per household recorded in 2001 to 2.9 persons by 2030. Based on the average of 3.11 persons per household over the period, an additional 23,440 dwellings will be required in Hume by 2021 (assuming full occupancy at 1996).

The most common form of housing in the City is the single detached dwelling and likely to remain so for some years even though the size and type of households is gradually changing. One of the challenges for Council is to increase the range of housing types available to meet the changing accommodation and lifestyle needs of the community.

There is a considerable lack of rental housing in the City, which minimises the amount of choice available to people who cannot afford to buy a home. In some parts of the City, namely Broadmeadows and Dallas, some rental housing stock is substandard and in need of maintenance or repair.

Being an outer metropolitan municipality, the amount of medium density development and site redevelopment is considerably less when compared with inner or middle metropolitan municipalities. Nevertheless, the issue of protecting areas of unique urban character and streetscape value from inappropriate medium density development remains. This is particularly so in the ‘old town’ areas of Sunbury and Westmeadows, and in the townships of Kalkallo and Bulla.
Employment

Hume City has a strong employment base that is focused largely on industry and airport-related activity. The main industrial areas are located on either side of the Hume Highway, extending northwards from Campbellfield to Somerton, or within and around Melbourne Airport. Sunbury and Craigieburn also contain industrial areas, however these areas are small in comparison and accommodate mainly service and light industrial-type uses.

Hume City’s strong industrial base is centred on the manufacturing sector, with over 35% of the City’s jobs in this industry. The second highest employer is the transport and storage sector with approximately 14% of the City’s jobs. Melbourne Airport is a major piece of infrastructure within the municipality. The airport directly employed 10,300 staff in 2003 and there are many more employment opportunities created in surrounding suburbs through support services.

The other major employer is the service sector, especially retail (13%) and wholesale (6.5%) trade. Most of the City’s retail, community services, recreation, personal and other services are located within the major centres of the municipality (including Broadmeadows, Sunbury, Gladstone Park and Roxburgh Park), or in smaller neighbourhood shopping centres. The Broadmeadows Transit City is a principal activity centre and contains the Broadmeadows Health Centre, Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE, Council’s main administration centre, a major shopping centre and the Broadmeadows Leisure Centre. The Sunbury town centre is the largest major activity centre in the City (the others being the centres of Galdstone Park and Roxburgh Park) and contains the most extensively developed retail, commercial and community facilities in the western half of the municipality. Several new activity centres are also planned for the Merri (Hume) Growth Corridor.

The unemployment rate for Hume City is above average for the region and for the State as a whole, dominated by culturally and linguistically diverse groups and by older workers who are structurally unemployed. Unemployment varies greatly across the municipality with significantly higher unemployment rates in the Broadmeadows area compared with other areas of the municipality.

There are more jobs within the municipality than there are residents in the labour force, which indicates unemployment in the City is largely due to a mismatch between local jobs and local skills. Whilst this adds to difficulties for local people accessing jobs across the region, it also provides local residents with opportunities to retrain and access local employment. Recent and forecast levels of development in Hume City are strong. Recent construction data (2003) shows that $161 million was invested in non-residential construction projects in the 12 month period, which does not include the large annual volumes invested in residential infrastructure, housing and major roads. A combined total of approximately $500 million was invested in construction across the city in the same period. In the 1996-2001 intercensal period, for every new household created in the city 1.8 new jobs were created.

It is expected that the City’s labour force will grow by 20,000 between 1996 and 2011. However, employment created from both the results of population growth and expected development will only partially provide these additional jobs. Action is needed to both ensure that adequate jobs are created and that local people have adequate to access to training, local jobs, and jobs in the wider metropolitan area.

Rural Areas

‘Rural’ land occupies 72% of the area of the municipality. A proportion of this land is used for rural living or lifestyle farming purposes, however the majority is used for agricultural activity with sheep and cattle grazing and cereal cropping being the predominant farming activities.

Much of the rural land in the City is characterized by a flat and sparsely treed landscape that enables open views across wide expanses of cleared grazing land and of attractive creek valleys. One of the consequences of such an open landscape is that there is only a limited amount of development that can be absorbed without the rural character changing.
The number of viable farms in the City has declined over the years. Most professional farmers remaining are long time residents, many of whom are approaching retirement. Little new investment by professional farmers is occurring and the decline in the number of professional farmers is likely to continue.

Nevertheless, maintaining the productive use of rural land is considered achievable and a desirable strategy to pursue. Agricultural productivity relates to a use which contributes to the productive capacity of the area and which may generate an economic return, but is not necessarily economically viable. It must also be distinguished from those uses which keep stock merely for domestic or private purposes (uses normally associated with low density residential and rural living sized allotments), or as a means of assisting in maintaining properties. One of the challenges for Council is to encourage the productive use of the City’s rural areas without diminishing the high landscape qualities of those areas.

Three small townships are located within the rural areas. Bulla is a township of about 696 people situated between the main metropolitan area and Sunbury, within the Deep Creek Valley. Kalkallo township is located in the northeastern corner of the municipality, adjacent to the Hume Highway, and accommodates about 142 permanent residents. These settlements will accommodate only small levels of new development due to environmental, servicing and (in the case of Bulla) airport-related constraints. The third township is Mickleham which contains a handful of residential buildings, a school, recreation reserve and several heritage sites.

Infrastructure

Hume City is well served by major roads and highways providing good connections to metropolitan Melbourne, and in the eastern sector by a rail service. The Hume Highway is a declared National Highway and of vital importance to Australia’s economic competitiveness. For some years however, there has been a recognised need to improve the highway link between the Western Ring Road and Craigieburn to cater for the expected increase in development in the Merri (Hume) Growth Corridor and to separate intra and inter state traffic from local traffic using the Hume Highway. To this end, VicRoads are currently managing the construction of the Craigieburn Bypass to connect the Hume Freeway at Craigieburn with the Western Ring Road. Construction of the Craigieburn Bypass is anticipated to be completed in 2005.

Similarly, in recognition of the expected increase in residential traffic in the Merri (Hume) Growth Corridor, a planning scheme reservation was placed in the planning scheme some years ago which provides for the construction of an arterial road (known as the E14) between the Western Ring Road and Craigieburn.

The State Government has committed to funding the electrification of the Melbourne-Sydney rail line between the current terminus of electric train services at Broadmeadows and Craigieburn. The project involves full electrification of the rail line, as well as the redevelopment of the Craigieburn train station and the construction of a new rail station at Roxburgh Park. The project is scheduled for completion in 2006.

The E14 arterial road, Craigieburn By-pass and Craigieburn Rail Electrification are major infrastructure projects which have the potential to significantly impact upon the eastern half of the City in coming years.

By far the most dominating transportation feature in the City is Melbourne Airport. The airport not only provides air passenger and freight services to Victoria, it provides significant employment for Hume residents and associated economic activity including accommodation, storage and transport industries and other industries that rely upon air freight services, many of which choose to locate close to the airport. The importance of the airport to the economy of the State and the convenience of Melbourne generally, depends upon the continued curfew-free operation of the airport. Therefore, the airport has vital implications for surrounding land uses, in particular those that may be affected by exposure to aircraft noise.
Infrastructure planning is a significant task in a City on the urban fringe such as Hume. The competing demands for water and sewerage supply in particular must be balanced. The development of the Merri (Hume) Growth Corridor is dictated to some extent by the supply of those services and the timing of the introduction of various users must be managed.

At present in this Corridor, however, the demand for land is dictating the provision of services rather than the service provision limiting the land supply. Around Sunbury the land servicing is similarly adequate for urban subdivision. However, low density residential and rural living subdivision proposals invariably propose on-site effluent disposal methods, the cumulative effect of which is not always adequately assessed. In addition, there are inefficiencies in providing other services (eg. water, electricity, garbage collection) in this pattern of development.

**Natural and Cultural Heritage**

The City has a rich natural heritage that is progressively being documented. The deep creek valleys incising the basalt plains provide wildlife habitats and topographical features such as escarpments that require careful management. Other topographical features of note include volcanic cones and hilltops. The Cooper Street grasslands are a nationally recognised feature and several other remnant grasslands and woodlands have also been identified.

These environmental qualities of the City are vulnerable and often under threat from rural activities, urban growth and neglect. The identification of these areas is the first step in ensuring their protection and enhancement.

The City also has a rich and very diverse cultural heritage that includes a significant collection of heritage bridges, ruins of bluestone cottages and flour mills, pastoral homesteads, sites reputedly associated with John Batman’s explorations, wineries, sites associated with community events of State and even national significance (such as religious and rock festivals), and five aboriginal ceremonial rings. This heritage is integral to the City’s identity and aspirations and constitutes a significant tourism and education resource.

**Key Issues**

Based on the snapshot described in Clause 21.01-5, the key issues affecting Hume City are:

- management and urban growth;
- maintaining social and physical infrastructure;
- providing quality, mix and tenure of housing;
- creating employment opportunities and access to employment;
- development of activity centres;
- providing transport and traffic infrastructure;
- balancing land use and development in the City’s rural areas;
- encouraging landscape character and urban design;
- maintaining natural and cultural heritage assets; and
- recognising the ongoing economic role of Melbourne Airport.