21.04  STRATEGIC ISSUES

As a result of several community consultation forums held in early 1997 and various community surveys since, a number of key strategic issues were identified. The policy response to these issues and actions stated in the MSS and the Corporate plan form the basis of the strategic direction of the City of Wodonga.

21.04-1 Issue – Regional Centre Role

There is an emerging realisation that Albury Wodonga has grown from being a regional centre to a national centre of significance.

Albury Wodonga, with its separate administrative institutions, faces the challenge of planning for and pursuing a range of services and facilities, which a centre of national significance requires to foster more economic growth and a quality lifestyle for its residents.

21.04-2 Issue – Regional Cooperation

The planning of Wodonga needs to be within the context of the wider region, recognising its strategic location and its geographic position in the upper catchment of the Murray River.

The city must plan with an understanding of the regional economic base, landscape setting, social profile, recreational and tourism opportunities.

21.04-3 Issue – Albury Wodonga

Albury Wodonga exists socially and economically as one city despite separate administrations at the State and local level.

Gateway Island presents an opportunity to link the twin cities providing a cultural and recreational heart for Albury Wodonga.

The duplication of facilities should be avoided.

Wodonga must be planned for in this context, ensuring there is:

- A quality and diversity of residential development
- Clean industries
- A vibrant revitalised Central Business Area
- Preservation of the natural setting – the river floodplain and hillsides

21.04-4 Issue – Albury Wodonga Development Corporation

The Albury Wodonga Development Corporation is being wound down and is in the process of a major asset disposal program. This issue requires careful management to ensure there is no negative impact on the local land market.

The role of the AWDC has shifted from a Planning Authority, Economic Development Board and Community Development agency to Land Developer.

The AWDC has added greatly to the growth and development of Albury Wodonga, its diminishing role challenges local government to coordinate the planning of Albury Wodonga and continue to attract investment and growth.
21.04-5 Issue – Facilities and Presentation

Wodonga lacks the range of facilities and level of presentation in the Central Business Area that is typically representative of a regional centre. This is due to the rapid transition of Wodonga from a small country town to Victoria’s fastest growing regional centre.

Wodonga is challenged with the issue of developing the facilities and quality of services to meet its role as a leading regional centre.

21.04-6 Issue – Wodonga Central Business Area (CBA)

The revitalisation of the CBA is a community priority.

The removal of the railway is viewed as an essential element in achieving the revitalisation of the CBA.

Visionary planning and a pro-active approach are required to improve the CBA.

Resources need to be focussed on consolidating CBA by encouraging redevelopment and linkage of High street with the Wodonga Plaza.

Traffic management works are required to improve the amenity of the CBA for pedestrians and shoppers.

21.04-7 Issue – Community Attitudes

The community is optimistic about the future of Wodonga, and affirms that it is a positive place to live and invest.

The community recognises the importance of planning for the future and working toward better outcomes.

21.04-8 Issue – The Hillsides

The hillsides are seen as part of the identity and character of Wodonga.

The Community has expressed clear support for the protection of the hillsides from intrusive development, insisting that hills which overlook the urban and future urban areas remain free of development.

There are environmental issues with the protection of the hills including:

- Land management responsibilities
- Weed control and feral animals
- Public access
- Private or public ownership?
- The cost of maintenance
- Management of public land is considered by the community to be under resourced and uncoordinated

21.04-9 Issue – Future Urban Growth

The future growth of Wodonga should be directed to the Middle Creek Valley (Leneva) between South Wodonga and Baranduda. Once again the development of Wodonga reaches the surrounding foothills.

Further industrial growth should be directed toward the West Wodonga Freight Node and Baranduda.