

12. MELBOURNE 2030: IMPLICATIONS FOR CITY OF YARRA ACTIVITY CENTRES

In late 2002, the State Government released “Melbourne 2030 – Planning for Sustainable Growth”, as a framework for future urban development across metropolitan Melbourne. Activity centres have been targeted under Melbourne 2030 as facilitating a major change in patterns of development and activity.

Major activity centres, such as the five centres covered by this Study, are seen by Melbourne 2030 as providing scope to accommodate future investment and change in the retail, office and residential markets which is consistent with an underlying objective of increasing the diversity of activity within these centres. Accordingly, Melbourne 2030 has nominated a number of strategic development objectives for major activity centres including:

- Encouragement of more “mixed use” development on appropriately located sites;
- Continuing to broaden the range of uses;
- Encouraging a wider range of arts, cultural and entertainment facilities; and
- The attraction of higher-density housing; and
- To reinforce the network of activity centres via the public transport system.

Melbourne 2030 has a number of implications for the five major activity centres within the City of Yarra. In general, the framework will act to reinforce many of the development trends, which have already begun to occur within the City of Yarra. These have included the attraction of office related uses in response to increasing demand for locations offering accessibility to the CBD and Melbourne’s freeway network, and proximity to retail strip centres offering attractive lunchtime activities for workers. Richmond, in particular is already a sought after location, due to its inner-eastern location, proximity to the South Eastern Freeway, Swan Street and Church Street. Continued demand for office space from small–medium sized business service providers will also support continued growth in the employment base of the City of Yarra. One implication of increased office based employment within the City of Yarra is that there will be an associated increase in traffic congestion as over 60% of employees travel to work in the City of Yarra by car.⁵ The impact of this upon carparking will however be dependent upon the adequacy of on-site parking within future office developments. It follows that future office developments should be located within walking distance of the main activity centres in order to discourage car usage. It should however be emphasised that office related uses need to be restricted to locations outside of the core retail precincts in order to maintain the continuity of retail activity. Local workers will provide regular support for retailers within the major activity centres both during working hours, and after hours as a result of their closer association with the City of Yarra.

The potential for more diverse retail activity within the City of Yarra has already occurred with a number of peripheral sales/bulky goods precincts emerging adjacent to core retail precincts. The continued development of the form of retailing within the City of Yarra contributes to the retail offer available to local residents and workers thus reducing the need to travel outside of the Municipality. The promotion of higher density residential development around major activity centres will also generate increasing demand for bulky goods retail outlets. The competitiveness of bulky goods precincts will however be dependent upon the ability of the Melbourne 2030 to prevent this form of retailing continuing to expand outside of activity centres, particularly in locations which are easily accessed by major arterial roads and freeways.

⁵ Vic roads, Journey to Work 1996: Census Statistics for Victorian Study Area