Mt Atkinson Western Freeway Commercial Area

Urban Design Framework - Economic Assessment

Submitted to MSA Properties Pty Ltd and Melton City Council

Prepared by Colliers Urban Planning

3 December 2025 | 3240340

'Gura Bulga'

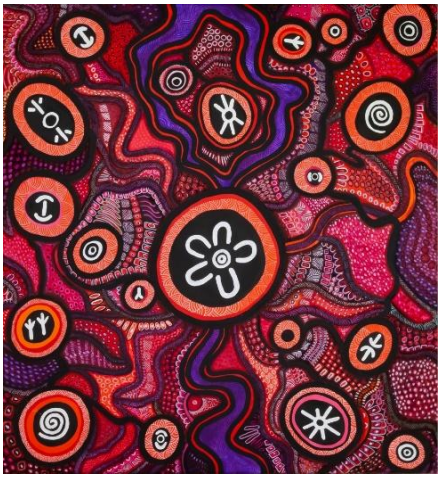
Liz Belanjee Cameron

'Gura Bulga' – translates to Warm Green Country. Representing New South Wales.

'Dagura Buumarri'

Liz Belanjee Cameron

'Dagura Buumarri' – translates to Cold Brown Country. Representing Victoria.



'Gadalung Djarri'

Liz Belanjee Cameron

'Gadalung Djarri' – translates to Hot Red Country. Representing Queensland.

Colliers Urban Planning acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and culture.

We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

In supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart, we walk with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

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Executive Summary

Background

1. Urban Design & Management (UDM), acting on behalf of MSA Properties Pty Ltd and Melton City Council (the client), have engaged Colliers Urban Planning (previously Ethos Urban) to undertake an economic assessment of potential land use opportunities to inform the preparation of the Mt Atkinson Western Commercial Area Urban Design Framework (UDF).
2. The land subject to this assessment encompasses the Western Freeway Commercial Area (WFCA), as identified in the Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains PSP, and the portion of the Mt Atkinson Major Town Centre (Mt Atkinson MTC) situated north of the Ballarat (rail) Line.
3. The PSP requires an UDF be prepared for the WFCA. Business/large format retailing (LFR) was identified in the PSP as the primary land use for the WFCA. This report considers the land use opportunities for the entire WFCA.

Location and Policy Context

4. Business/LFR is identified in Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains PSP as the primary use for the WFCA and comprise some 30.2ha of Net Developable Area (NDA) as per the Land Use Budget prepared by UDM. In addition, the northern portion of Mt Atkinson MTC supports 6.3ha within the WFCA. The PSP states that shop/leasable floorspace must not exceed 2,500m² without a planning permit for the portion of the Mt Atkinson MTC north of the rail corridor. In effect, this reflects a 'soft cap' for retail floorspace in the precinct.
5. The WFCA is particularly suited for LFR uses in view of its accessibility and exposure to passing Western Freeway and Hopkins Road traffic, and strategic location adjacent Mt Atkinson MTC in the broader Melton Growth Corridor (MGC).
6. Higher-order centres in the balance of the MGC and of relevance to this assessment include Melton (existing), a LFR node at Melton East (developing) and the planned Cobblebank Metropolitan Activity Centre. These centres currently or will likely support LFR components.
7. Beyond the MGC, existing major centres and LFR locations of note include Caroline Springs, Watergardens, Hopper Crossing Bulky Goods Precinct, and Maribyrnong Homemaker Precinct.
8. A Draft UDF for the Mt Atkinson Major Town Centre (MTC) has been prepared. The Draft UDF plans for a MTC to the south of the railway line with a 'shop' floorspace cap of 40,000m^2, somewhat larger than 23,500m^2 envisaged in the PSP. Other relevant components of the Draft UDF for the WFCA include a shift of the core parts of the MTC to the south with mixed use areas planned for the immediate south of the planned station, and a significant area of land planned for business/large format retail to the east of Strathbogie Drive.

Regional Economic Context

9. While new dwelling approvals in the MGC have slowed since the peak in 2021, they still remain elevated above pre-COVID-19 levels. This is driving strong rates of population growth which will be supported over the next 20 or more years by the release of greenfield residential land associated with the completion of numerous PSPs.
10. Residential construction and population growth are two key drivers of demand for retailing, particularly homemaker and large format retailing.

11. An expansion of local employment opportunities is also expected associated with the development of numerous town centres and employment areas.

Large Format Retail Opportunities

12. The WFCA is ideally situated to be the pre-eminent LFR precinct serving the MGC. Its central location to the growth corridor and high levels of exposure and accessibility to the Melton Freeway and Hopkins Road are key features that would be attractive to major LFR brands.
13. It is estimated there could be demand for approximately 90,000m² (rounded) of additional LFR floorspace in the Main Trade Area (MTA) served by the WFCA by around 2040, having regard for future population growth and industry benchmarks, as well as existing and planned competition. The land budget and plan prepared by UDM indicates potential for around 90,650m² of 'commercial (LFR floorspace)' at the WFCA. Hopkins Road Business Precinct and the areas in the Mt Atkinson MTC are other potential locations for LFR development.
14. Given the WFCA's locational attributes including its co-location with the northern portion of Mt Atkinson MTC, the WFCA should be considered a primary location for LFR in the Mt Atkinson area.

Town Centre Type Land Use Opportunities

15. In order to support an activated precinct to the north of the railway, it will be important to consider land uses that:
    - Complement the land uses proposed in the MTC to the south of the railway line.
    - Complement the potential for a major LFR centre located to the immediate north.
    - Can attract customers and activity in their own right, acknowledging the potential for real or perceived barriers to customer movement between the northern and southern parts of the MTC.
16. Having regard for the above, the following are considered potential land uses for the northern part of the MTC:
    - Supermarket and convenience retailing, with the extent and operators dependant on what is planned in the MTC to the south.
    - Medical centre and allied health, with potential also dependant on what is planned in the MTC to the south.
    - Commercial office, with the extent likely to be limited to smaller-scale local service-related in shop-front tenancies; however, potential may exist for standalone co-working space.
    - Commercial accommodation presents as a potential use once the surrounding employment areas and MTC to the south develop.
    - Entertainment uses may represent a potential opportunity. Although, the type and size would be influenced by entertainment uses planned and developed to the south of the railway line, as well competition entertainment aspects in the broader region.

Introduction

Background

Urban Design & Management (UDM), acting on behalf of MSA Properties Pty Ltd and Melton City Council (the client), have engaged Colliers Urban Planning (previously Ethos Urban) to undertake an economic assessment to inform the preparation of the Mt Atkinson Western Commercial Area Urban Design Framework (UDF).

The land subject to this assessment is located in the northern portion of the Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) and is in the City of Melton Local Government Area (Melton LGA). This land encompasses the Western Freeway Commercial Area (WFCA), as identified in the Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains PSP, and the portion of the Mt Atkinson Major Town Centre (MTC) situated north of the Ballarat (rail) Line.

The PSP requires a UDF be prepared for the WFCA. Business/large format retailing (LFR) was identified in the PSP as the primarily land use for the WFCA.

Per a Memorandum of Understanding, UDM will prepare and deliver the UDF on behalf of Melton City Council. To inform the development of the UDF, an economic assessment of the large format retail (LFR) and other business opportunities for the WFCA and northern portion of Mt Atkinson MTC is required.

Accordingly, this report provides an economic assessment of land use opportunities for this area. Consideration of the opportunity for LFR is a particular focus in view of the directions outlined in the Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains PSP.

This Report

This report contains the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Location and Policy Context

Chapter 2: Melton Growth Corridor Regional Economic Context

Chapter 3: Large Format Retail Assessment

Chapter 4: Town Centre Land Use Opportunities

1.0 Location and Policy Context

This chapter provides an overview of the Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains PSP area and other relevant policies, focusing on directions relevant to the WFCA and Mt Atkinson MTC. The broader development and land use planning context of the Melton Growth Corridor (MGC) is also considered including existing and planned higher-order activity centres and LFR nodes.

1.1 Western Freeway Commercial Area (WFCA)

For the purposes of this assessment, the WFCA is the land area subject to the WFCA UDF. This precinct comprises approximately 40ha and includes:

- The original WFCA as identified in the Mt Atkinson & Tarneit Plains PSP – June 2019 (Amended January 2020)
- The portion of the Mt Atkinson MTC located north of the rail corridor
- Recent amendments to the WCFA now indicate that additional land will be allocated for LFR purposes. This adjustment is a result of the relocation of the Melbourne Water infrastructure to outside of the WCFA, while the local park and northern link remain the same.

The WFCA is the area of particular relevance to this economic assessment. Refer Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2.

This precinct encompasses the majority of the subject land, in addition to land controlled by the State Government (roads corporations), as well as other private entities. Existing uses include the showroom building on the subject land and a 7-Eleven Service Station located immediately south-east of the Western Freeway - Hopkins Road intersection.

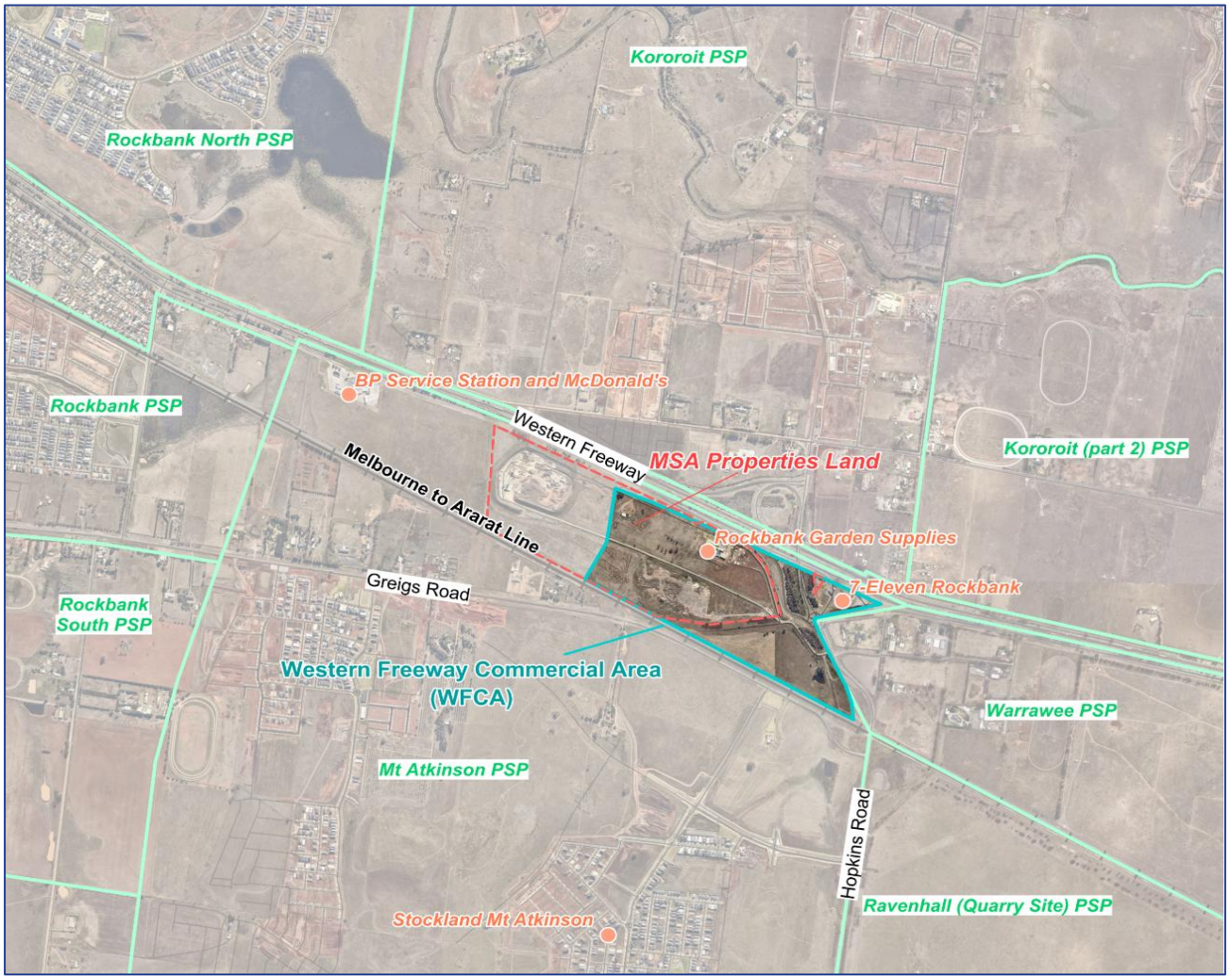
A rail corridor abuts the WFCA to the south and a future train station is proposed for a site controlled by VicTrack straddling the rail corridor and abutting the southern and northern components of Mt Atkinson MTC. Mount Atkinson Holdings own the land identified for the MTC south of the rail corridor (and future train station) and a draft UDF has recently been prepared for the area and is currently out on consultation.

Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains PSP requires an Urban Design Framework (UDF) to be prepared for the WFCA. Excluding roads, the majority of the WFCA is identified for 'business/LFR' uses by the PSP, except for the small triangular parcel immediately east of Hopkins Road which accommodates the 7-Eleven Service Station (and is identified for 'business' uses).

A Land Use Budget for the WFCA has been prepared by UDM to inform preparation of the UDF (refer Figure 1.2). The net developable area (NDA) is estimated at 37.4ha (or 77.5% of total land area) and includes:

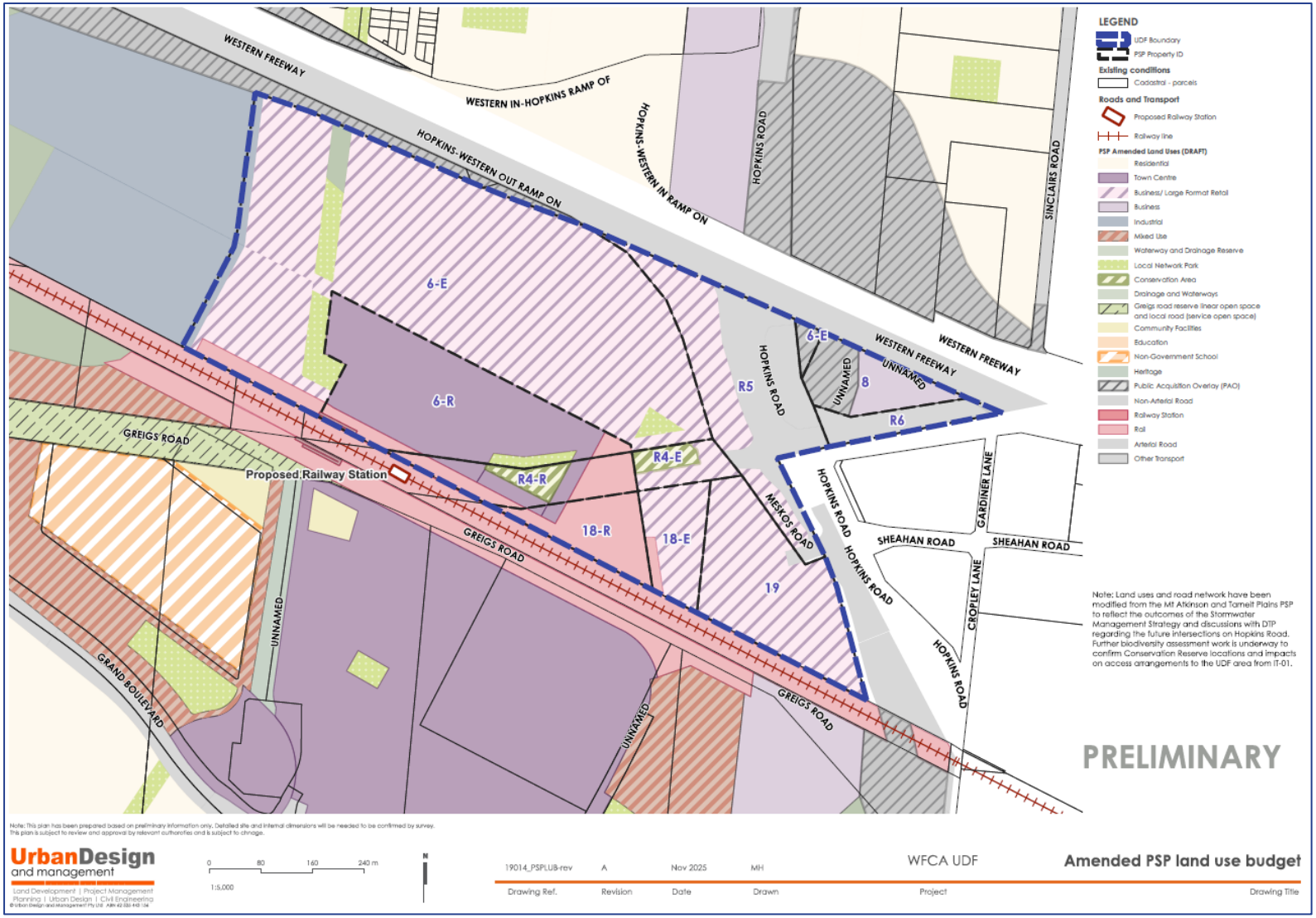
- Approximately 30.2ha of NDA identified for business/LFR
- Approximately 6.3ha of NDA comprising the northern portion of Mt Atkinson MTC
- Some 0.9ha of NDA identified for 'business' (representing the triangular parcel that accommodates the 7-Eleven).
- The land controlled by the client is estimated to include 20.7ha (or 90%) of NDA and is identified for business/LFR and the majority (89%) of the MTC NDA (5.6ha).

Figure 1.1 Western Freeway Commercial Area (WFCA)



Source: Colliers Urban Planning

Figure 1.2 Preliminary Land Use Budget for WFCA (UDF)



Source: Urban Design & Management (UDM)

1.2 Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains PSP

Gazetted in February 2020 via Amendment C217 to the Melton Planning Scheme, the Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains PSP applies to an area of some 1,530ha (rounded) bound by:

- Warrawee PSP (future) and Ravenhall - Quarry Site PSP (future) to the east
- Chartwell East PSP (future) and Derrimut Fields PSP (future), to the south
- The western plains grassland area, to the west and south-west
- Rockbank PSP (completed), to the west
- The Western Freeway to the north.

The Mt Atkinson & Tarneit Plains PSP sets out a mixed-used scheme including the following components:

- **Residential.** Approximately 7,950 dwellings accommodating around 22,400 residents, including some 1,550 dwellings (or 19%) within activity centres or mixed-use precincts. Significant residential development has already occurred in the PSP with Stockland developing the residential components.
- **Activity Centres:**
  - **Mt Atkinson MTC** – comprising 23,500m^2 of shop floorspace south of the rail corridor, and 2,500m^2 to the north (or 26,000m^2 of shop floorspace in total). Note that, the Draft Mt Atkinson MTC UDF proposes increased floorspace figures including 40,000m^2 of 'shop' floorspace to the south of the railway line. The MTC is identified to provide a full range of retail, commercial, mixed-use (including high density housing) and private community facilities. The core retail component, including major supermarket anchors and associated uses, would be located south of the rail corridor. It is noted that the MTC would provide a 'main street' layout with a pedestrian focus and integrate with the future train station. Retail components would include a high-amenity food and beverage/entertainment area.
  - **The WFCA** includes the northern portion of the MTC. As noted earlier, the area of the MTC to the south of the rail corridor is controlled by Mount Atkinson Holdings who intend to develop the site for a shopping centre. It is stated in the PSP (p30) that, without a planning permit, shop/leasable floorspace must not exceed 23,500m^2 for the MTC area south of the rail corridor (note changes described above in the Draft UDF); and 2,500m^2 for the portion north of the rail corridor.
  - **Western Local Convenience Centre** – comprising 1,500m^2 of shop floorspace in the western portion of the PSP.
  - **Eastern Local Convenience Centre** – comprising 1,500m^2 of shop floorspace in the eastern portion of the PSP.
  - **Mt Atkinson South Industrial Convenience Centre** – comprising 1,000m^2 of convenience shops servicing the industrial area in the southern portion of the PSP.
  - **Tarneit Plains Industrial Convenience Centre** – comprising 500m^2 of convenience shops.
- **Business/LFR**. Business/LFR uses are identified in the north-eastern portion of the PSP. The majority of land for business/LFR is in the:
  - WFCA (as identified in the PSP)
  - Hopkins Road Business Precinct
  - Land identified in the eastern portion of the Draft Mt Atkinson MTC UDF, also along Hopkins Road.

  The PSP notes that separate UDFs are to be prepared for the WFCA and Hopkins Road Business Precinct to guide development of these respective areas. The Hopkins Road Business Precinct UDF was adopted in late 2022. An overview of the Hopkins Road Business Precinct UDF is provided later in this Chapter.

The PSP envisages the Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains precinct would support approximately 40,000m^2 in restricted retail (ie. LFR) as well as businesses uses. A previous report by JLL (Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains: Commercial and Industrial Land Review, 2015) which informed the PSP's preparation, noted the precinct had potential to accommodate between 40,000m^2 to 100,000m^2 in of bulky goods floorspace (i.e. LFR), with the final provision dependent on the ability to attract major tenants such as Costco & Ikea.

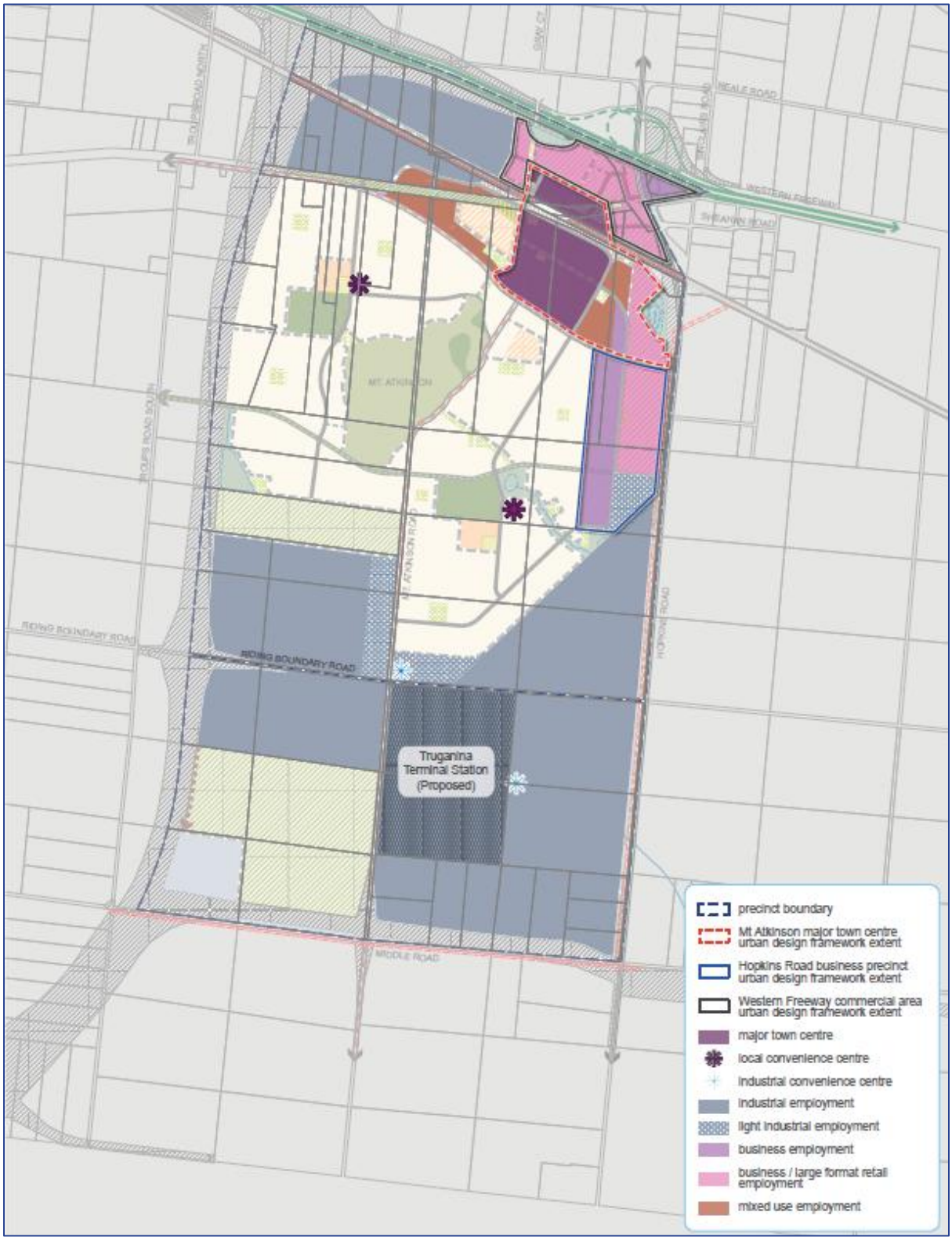
- **Industrial**. Some 415ha of industrial land is identified, with the majority located in the southern reaches of the PSP and a smaller provision of industrial land in the north-west portion of the PSP – both north and south of the rail corridor. Vehicle access to the industrial area in the north-west portion of the PSP and north of the rail corridor would likely be through the WFCA. As such, careful traffic engineering and urban design treatment will be required to ensure the development of the WFCA is functional having regard for likely heavy vehicle traffic movements through the precinct associated with adjacent industry.

The WFCA and the area of Mt Atkinson MTC located north of the rail corridor is the primary focus of this assessment, as previously noted.

The WFCA is particularly suited for LFR uses in view of its accessibility and exposure to passing Western Freeway and Hopkins Road traffic, and strategic location adjacent Mt Atkinson MTC in the broader Melton Growth Corridor (MGC). Refer Section 1.5.

Hopkins Road Business Precinct and land identified in the Draft Mt Atkinson MTC UDF are also suited for LFR and share some attributes of WFCA including exposure and accessibility to Hopkins Road. Although, both these precincts lack the exposure to Western Freeway traffic offered by the planned LFR areas in the WFCA UDF.

Figure 1.3 Mt Atkinson & Tarneit Plains PSP - Employment Components



Source: Victorian Planning Authority (VPA); Mt Atkinson & Tarneit Plains PSP – June 2019 (Amended January 2020)

1.3 Other Relevant Policy Documents

Plan for Victoria

Plan for Victoria is the long-term strategy for Victoria, aimed at making Victoria a more liveable, prosperous, and sustainable place by 2050. The plan was developed through extensive community consultation, involving over 20,000 people and more than 15,000 items of feedback from across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria, which helped shape the vision and priorities.

The vision for Victoria by 2050, as articulated by the People's Panel, is "*a vibrant, accessible, and connected community that values its diverse cultures, sustainable environmental practices, and respects the First Peoples of Victoria. It aims to provide choices and opportunities for current and future generations in housing quality, transport, employment, environment, and connectivity*".

Plan for Victoria is based around five pillars that guide its actions:

i. **Housing for all Victorians**: Ensuring diverse and affordable homes are available in well-designed, liveable communities.

ii. **Accessible jobs and services**: Delivering more jobs closer to homes and ensuring access to essential services, education, and healthcare.

iii. **Great places, suburbs, and towns**: Creating attractive and inclusive places that support well-being and community life.

iv. **Sustainable environments**: Protecting the environment, natural resources, and transitioning to a net-zero emissions economy.

v. **Self-determination and caring for Country**: Upholding the rights and aspirations of Traditional Owners and First Peoples in planning and land management.

Regarding employment, Plan for Victoria reinforces the need for accessible jobs and services, aiming to deliver more jobs closer to homes through strategic planning and infrastructure investment. Employment and innovation areas, education precincts, health precincts, and state-significant industrial precincts are critical to the Plan.

The WFCA UDF specifically supports the pillars of *accessible jobs and services* and *great places, suburbs, and towns* by providing employment opportunities well located to public transport and central to the Melton Growth Corridor.

Hopkins Road Business Precinct UDF

The Urban Design Framework (UDF) for the Hopkins Road Business Precinct (HRBP) in Melton was adopted by Melton City Council in October 2022. The HRBP is located to the south of the Mt Atkinson Major Town Centre UDF and has frontage along Hopkins Road.

It provides a vision and guidelines for the development of the 47.3ha precinct, which is designated for industrial and commercial uses including large format retail and light industrial activities. The UDF aims to ensure high-quality urban design, efficient land use, and sustainable development with a focus on connectivity and accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.

The UDF includes land allocated for LFR along Hopkins Road in the northern portion of the UDF area, and industrial uses to the south. To the west, an area for "Business" uses is identified which provides a

transition between the LFR area to the eat and residential area to the west. In broad terms, the allocation of LFR uses is similar to that envisaged in the Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains PSP.

Figure 1.4 Hopkins Road Business Precinct UDF Urban Structure & Land Use Plan

Source: Melton City Council, Hopkins Road Business Precinct UDF, October 2022

Draft Mt Atkinson Major Town Centre UDF

The Draft Mt Atkinson MTC UDF sets out a long-term vision for Mt Atkinson Major Town Centre (MTC) as a mixed-use, pedestrian-focused hub for retail, commercial, residential, and community activities.

While the UDF responds to the Concept Plan provided in the PSP, there are some significant changes, namely a significant increase in 'shop' floorspace form 23,500m^2 to 40,000m^2.

Key elements of the Draft UDF relating to retail and commercial uses are outlined below:

- Retail Core: Anchored by supermarkets, mini-majors, specialty retail, food & beverage, and entertainment. Located along Station Street and Shared Street, forming the "town heart" around the Urban Plaza. Planned provision of up to 40,000 sqm of retail floorspace (with flexibility for growth subject to demand analysis).
- Mixed-Use Precincts: Surrounding the retail core and which are planned for a mix of retail, office, health services, community uses, and higher-density residential.
- Employment and Large Format Retail Precincts: Located east of Strathbogie Drive and west of Hopkins Road, includes showrooms, bulky goods retail, and business park uses. Designed with landscaped setbacks and integrated parking.

A Rail Corridor Precinct has been identified in the north of the precinct, immediately south of the railway line, as an area requiring 'further investigation'. The future use and development of this land may have implications for the WFCA located to the north.

Figure 1.5 DRAFT Mt Atkinson Major Town Centre UDF

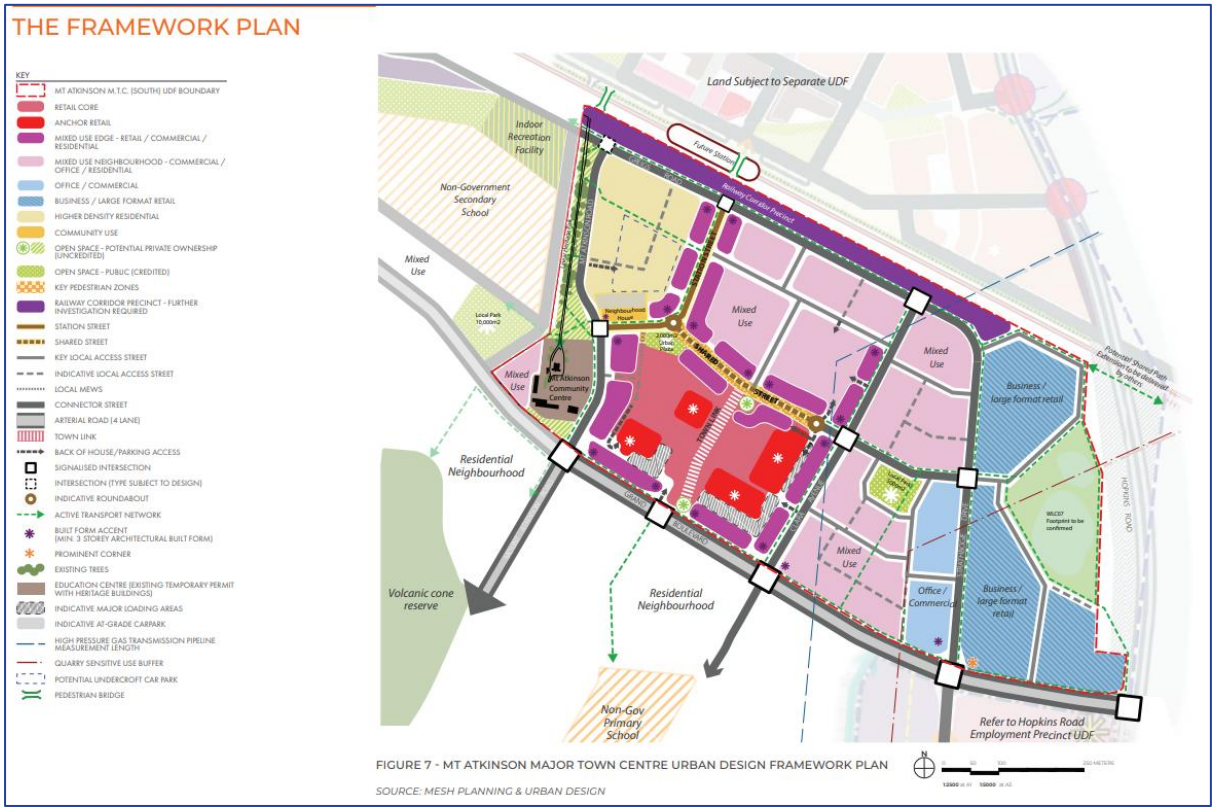


FIGURE 7 - MT ATKINSON MAJOR TOWN CENTRE URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK PLAN

SOURCE: MESH PLANNING & URBAN DESIGN

Source: City of Melton; Mesh Planning

Melton Employment and Industrial Land Supply and Review

The Melton Employment and Industrial Land Strategy was prepared by Charter Keck Cramer and adopted by Melton City Council in June 2024.

The Strategy identifies three overarching directions:

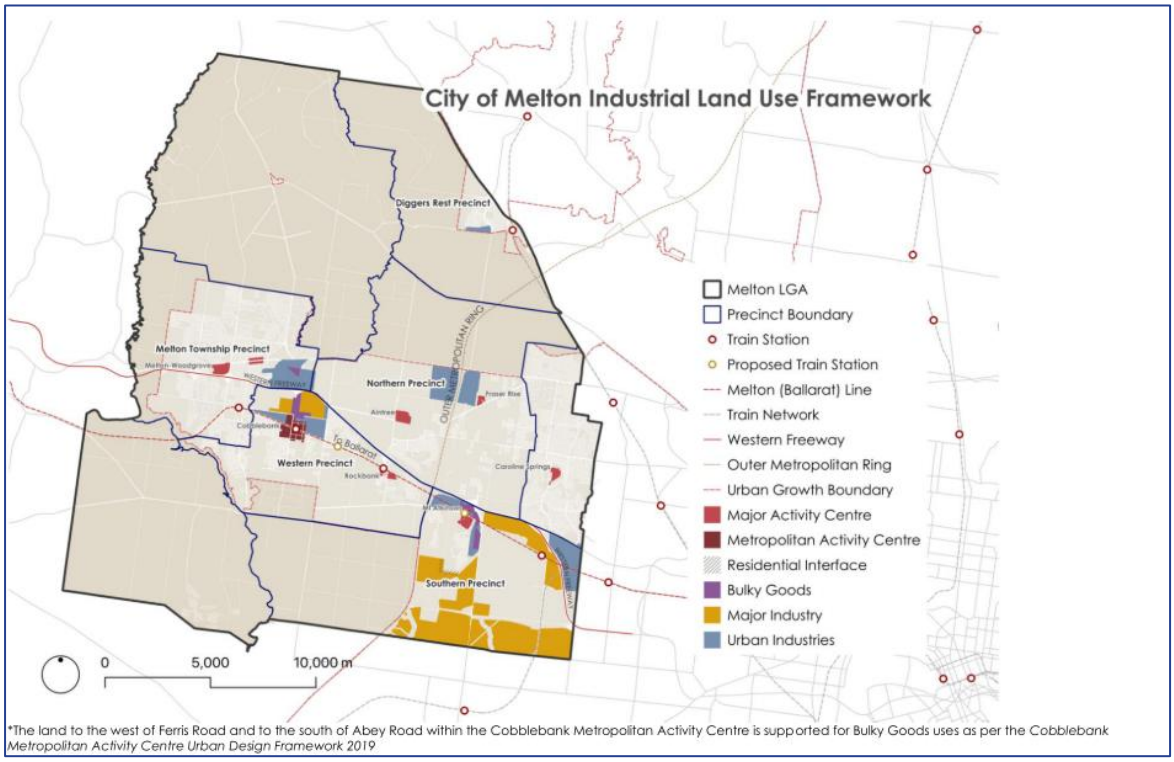
- Facilitating industrial growth and diversification through ensuring sufficient industrial land supply, providing investment certainty, advocating for infrastructure, and promoting the City of Melton as a location for new economy skills.
- Boosting local employment growth by integrating employment, housing, and services, directing investment to urban centres, developing "Live Work Play" environments, and promoting local workforce capability.
- Preparing for change by ensuring land use settings support innovation, new mobility technology, new energy infrastructure, and a low-emissions future.

The Mt Atkinson WFCA is part of the Southern Precinct, which is a key employment-focused location experiencing strong growth in industrial development. It also forms part of the Western Freeway Economic Corridor as described below and shown in Figure 1.7.

“An economic corridor is a distinct geographic area in which economic uses are linked by high quality transport connections. The vision for the Western Freeway Economic Corridor entails building on the existing transport advantages of the Ballarat Rail Line and the Western Freeway to link people to jobs and places to people via high quality transport options.” (p37)

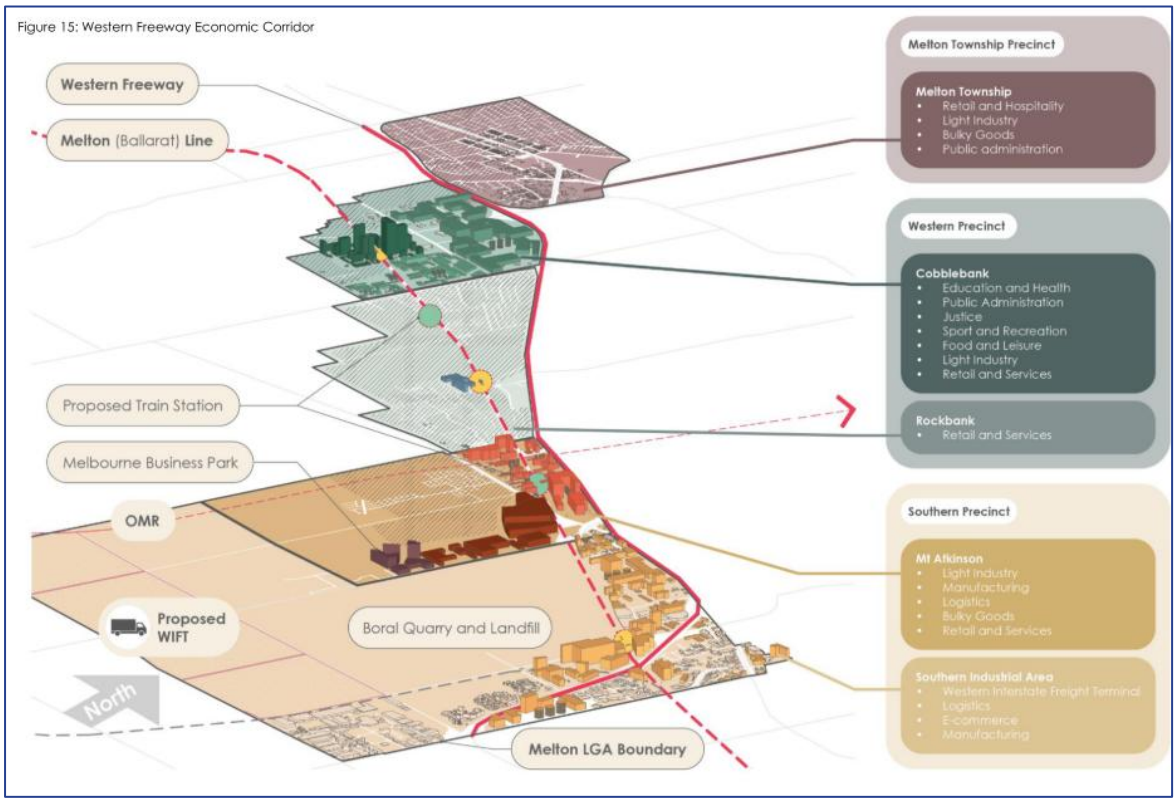
The City of Melton Industrial Land Use Framework is shown in Figure 1.6 and identifies the Mt Atkinson WFCA as a location for bulky goods retailing and urban industries – both of which are broadly consistent with that planned in the PSP.

Figure 1.6 City of Melton Industrial Land Use Framework



Source: Charter Keck Cramer

Figure 1.7 Western Freeway Economic Corridor (WFEC)



Source: Charter Keck Cramer

Western Growth Corridor Plan

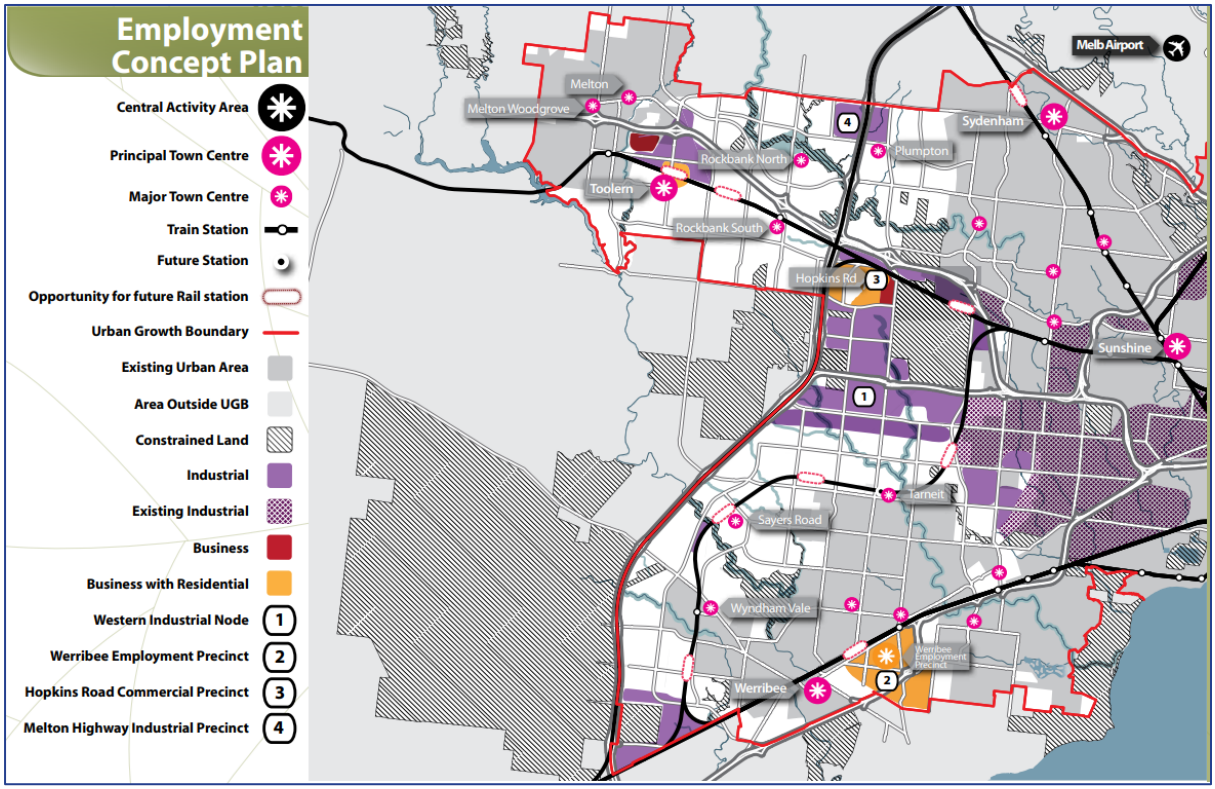
The Western Corridor Plan was completed in 2012 as a subset of the Growth Areas Authority's (now VPA's) Growth Corridor Plans – Managing Melbourne's Urban Growth. Corridor plans are incorporated documents in planning schemes.

The Western Corridor Plan relates to the area referred to as the West Growth Corridor which comprises developing and future urban areas within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) in Wyndham and Melton LGAs. It was noted that the West Growth Corridor would eventually support a residential population of more than 377,000 persons and accommodate at least 164,000 jobs.

The Plan designated land in the north-east reaches of the Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains PSP for 'business' – which it referred to as the Hopkins Road Commercial Precinct. Areas in the balance of the PSP were designated for 'business and residential' or 'industrial' uses. A MTC was not identified for the Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains PSP by this document.

MTC's were identified in the broader region at Rockbank, Rockbank North, Plumpton, Melton and Woodgrove Shopping Centre, while Toolern was designated as a Principal Town Centre.

Figure 1.8 Western Growth Corridor Plan



Source: Growth Areas Authority (now the Victorian Planning Authority)

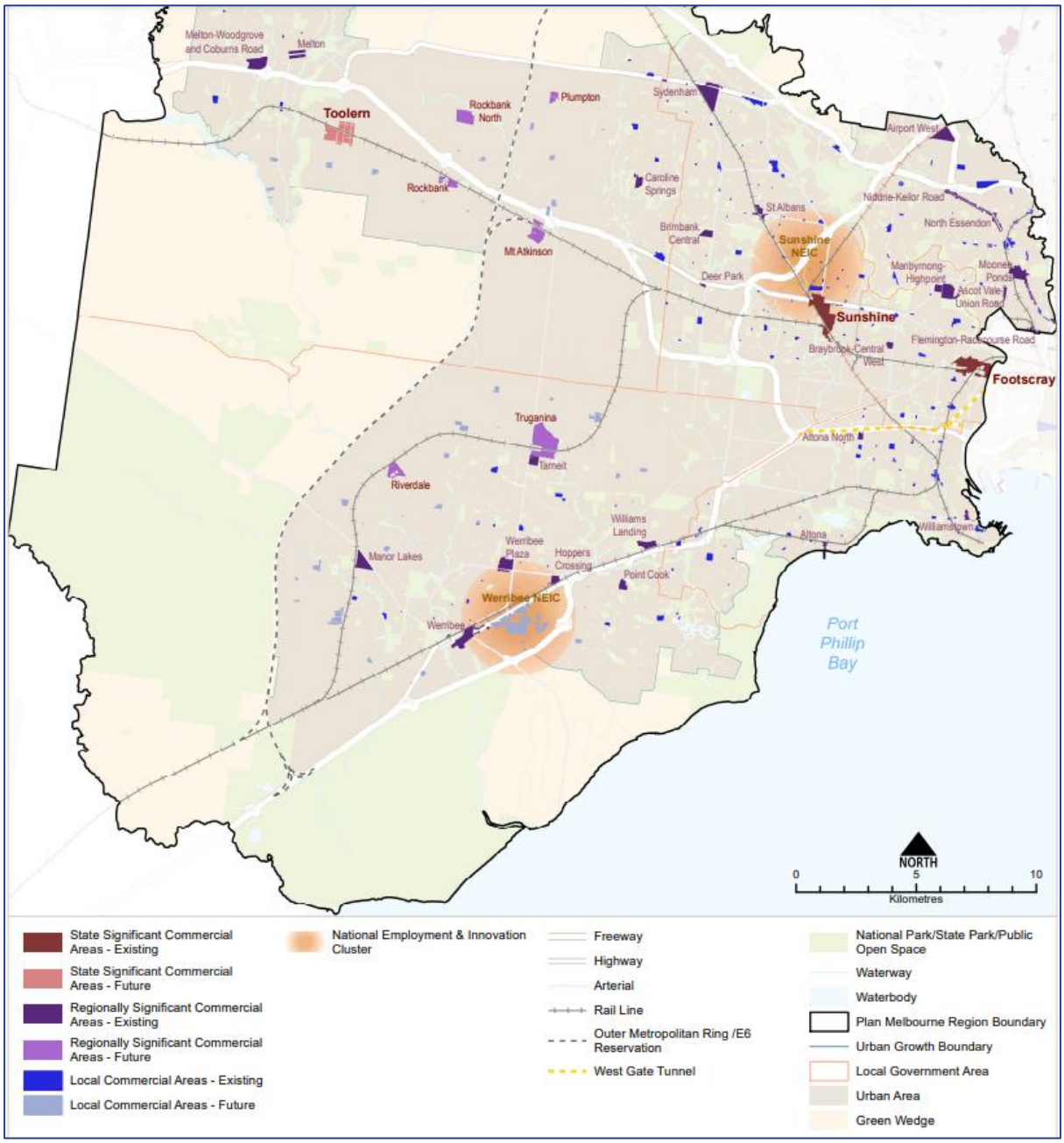
Melbourne Industrial & Commercial Land Use Plan

Released in April 2020, the Melbourne Industrial & Commercial Land Use Plan (MICLUP) considers current and future needs for industrial and commercial land across metropolitan Melbourne. It establishes a hierarchy for commercial and industrial land consisting of state, regional and local precincts. Whilst the MICLUP is not an incorporated document in all planning schemes, it is referenced at Clause 17.03-3S.

Mt Atkinson MTC is identified as a regionally-significant commercial area (future) by MICLUP. It is stated that regionally-significant commercial areas should provide for and support access to a wide range of employment opportunities, including intensive forms of employment uses such as office and commercial activity.

The Melton East LFR cluster on the eastern periphery of Melton is situated on land designated as regionally-significant industrial land (existing) rather than as a commercial area (regionally-significant or local).

Figure 1.9 MICLUP - Existing & Future Commercial Land



Source: Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning; MICLUP Part A

City of Melton Retail and Activity Centre Strategy, 2014

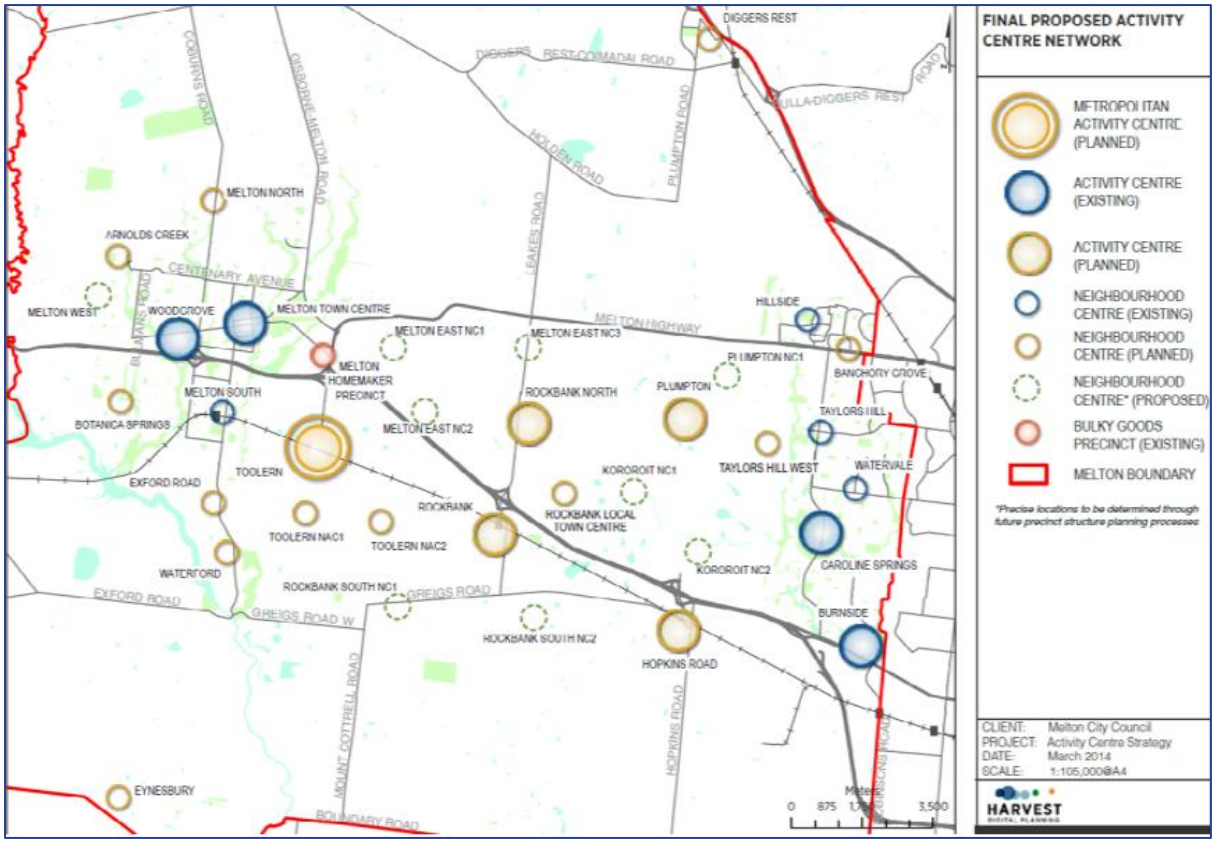
Prepared in 2014 for City of Melton by Tim Nott, Harvest Digital Planning and Hansen Partnership, this document outlines policies and directions to guide the planning and development of activity centres in the municipality.

An activity centre (referred to as Hopkins Road) was identified by the Strategy south-west of Hopkins Road and the Western Freeway intersection. It was noted that the size and role of this activity centre would be resolved via the PSP process for Mt Atkinson.

The Strategy also outlines the importance of bulky goods precincts (LFR precincts), especially around Melton in order to support the rapidly developing residential areas (p6). Further, it is also noted that other clusters of bulky goods are encouraged to be located adjacent to larger activity centres including Major Town Centres and Metropolitan Town Centres (p6).

It is understood \Melton City Council will commence an updated Activity Centre Strategy in 2026.

Figure 1.10 Melton Activity Centre Strategy – Final Proposed Activity Centre Network



Source: Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning; MICLUP Part A

1.4 Melton Growth Corridor (MGC)

The MGC is described as encompassing developing and future urban areas to the north and south of the Western Freeway in Melton LGA between Caroline Springs and the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) west of Melton township (refer Figure 1.11).

The MGC is a subset of the broader West Growth Corridor which comprises developing and future urban areas within the UGB in Wyndham and Melton LGAs, as identified in Growth Corridor Plans – Managing Melbourne's Growth (2012).

Urban development in the MGC is largely attributed to the planning and development of PSPs areas. According to the VPA, the status of PSPs in the MGC is outlined as follows:

- **Completed.** Mt Atkinson & Tarneit Plains, Kororoit, Plumpton, Taylors Hill West, Rockbank North, Rockbank, Paynes Road, Toolern, Toolern Park, Melton North, Robinsons Road Employment Area North and Robinsons Road Employment Area South
- **Under Preparation.** Melton East
- **Pre-commencement.** Kororoit (Part 2)
- **Unprogrammed.** Bulmans Road, Chartwell, Derrimut Fields, Melton West Minns Road, Rockbank South, Ravenhall (Quarry Site), Warrawee, Warrensbrook.

Rockbank PSP (completed), situated immediately west of the subject site, will primarily comprise residential (some 1,750 dwellings) and a major town centre and local convenience centre. Development of residential components commenced in 2018 and are ongoing.

Warrawee PSP (future), Robinsons Road Employment Area North PSP (completed), Robinsons Road Employment Area South PSP (completed) and Chartwell East PSP (future) will collectively form an expansion of the Western State Significant Industrial Precinct.

Other relevant PSPs in the immediate area are:

Rockbank North (completed), located north-west of the PSP and including approximately 7,280 dwellings at full development, a MTC, a local town centre and a local convenience centre. Construction has been ongoing since 2015.

- Kororoit (completed), located north of the PSP and including some 9,214 dwellings, two local town centres, and town convenience centres. Residential construction has commenced in this precinct.

The anticipated population growth from the development of these precincts will generate demand for higher-order retail facilities – including LFR.

Higher-order centres in the balance of the MGC and of relevance to this assessment, include:

- **Melton (existing).** Includes the Woodgrove Shopping Centre which comprises approximately 32,000m^2 in retail floorspace and strip-retailing along High Street supporting around 44,000m^2 in floorspace. Located at Melton East is the Melton Homemaker Centre. This development comprised two stages, with Stage 1 including The Good Guys, Chemist Warehouse and Super Cheap Auto, with Stage 2 recently opening (late 2024) accommodating Harvey Norman and 15 other tenancies. West Pines LFR development completed all stages of its development in early 2024. In its first stage, West Pines comprised an 18,000m^2 Bunnings Warehouse, with Stage 2 including other tenants such as Officeworks, Petbarn and Beacon lighting amongst other retailers.

- **Melton East (developing).** The (proposed) Melton Mega Centre underwent a VCAT process. As such, approval was granted in 2014 for approximately 50,000m^2 LFR centre at 1 Federation Drive, although to-date construction has not commenced and no further update has been provided.
- **Cobblebank Metropolitan Activity Centre (planned)**. Situated within the Toolern PSP area, Cobblebank is planned to be the largest activity centre in the MGC and is identified to support approximately 70,000m^2 in retail floorspace including a full range of supermarkets, discount department stores, mini majors, specialities etc.

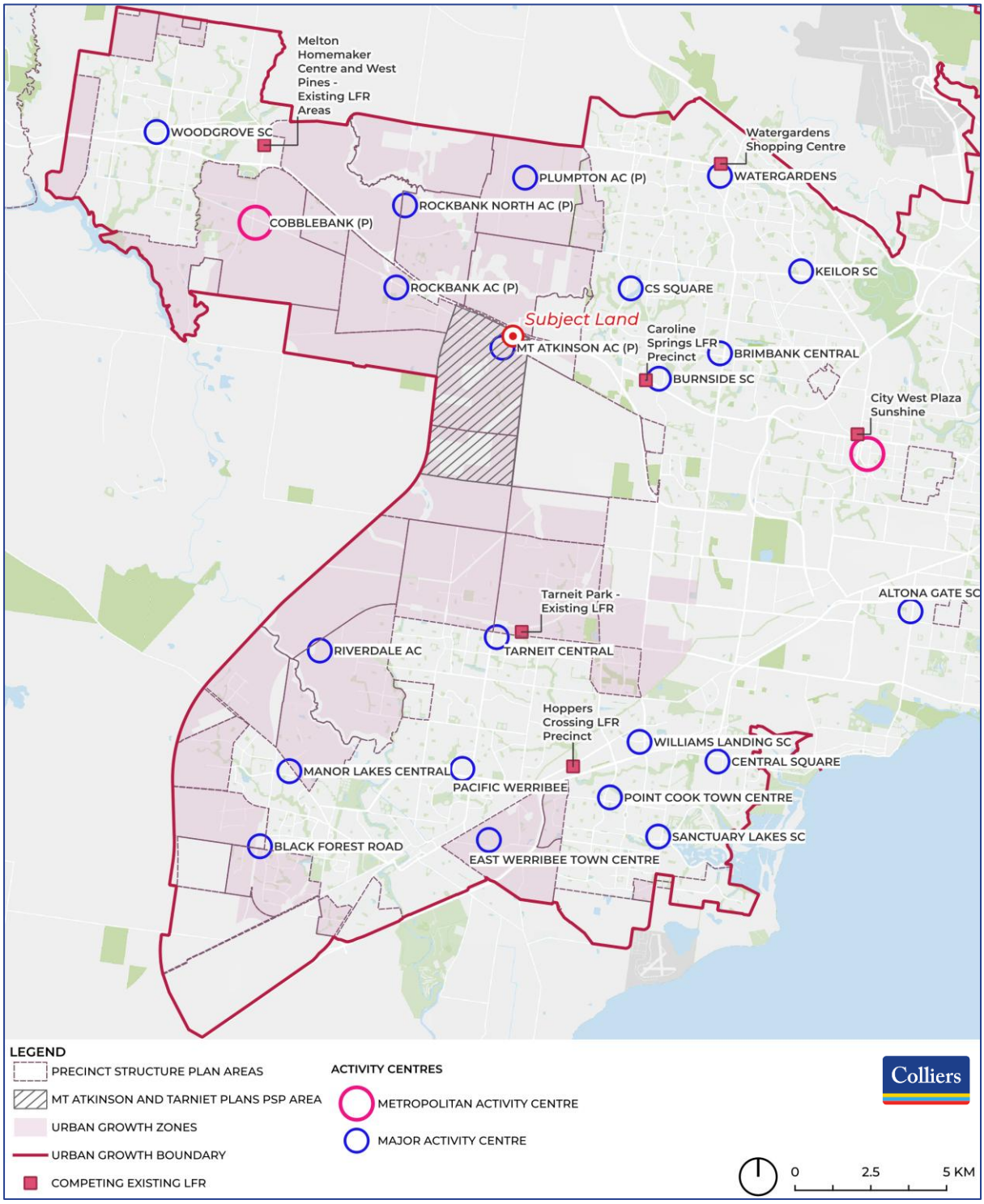
In addition, MTC's are planned at Rockbank, Rockbank North and Plumpton PSPs which are expected to have a sub-regional region trading role.

1.5 Relevant Activity Centres & LFR Locations Outside Melton Growth Corridor

Beyond the MGC, existing major centres and LFR locations of note include:

- **Caroline Springs** – including Caroline Springs Activity Centre (a sub-regional centre) and a LFR node adjacent the Western Freeway supporting a Bunnings, Officeworks, Sydney Tools and Fantastic Furniture among other tenants.
- **Watergardens** – a regional shopping centre supporting approximately 55,000m^2 in floorspace including 45,000m^2 of LFR floorspace, located some 10km north-east of the WFCA.
- **Hopper Crossing Bulky Goods Precinct** – An extensive LFR precinct located adjacent Old Geelong Road at Hoppers Crossing including Harvey Norman, Bunnings, Anaconda and Spotlight. This precinct is approximately 15km south of the WFCA.
- **Maribyrnong Homemaker Precinct** – Located approximately 16km east of the WFCA adjacent Highpoint MAC, this precinct accommodates a variety of large format retailers including Harvey Norman, Anaconda, Fantastic Furniture, Spotlight, Bunnings, The Good Guys, Officeworks etc.

Figure 1.11 Melton Growth Corridor & Surrounds



Source: Colliers Urban Planning

Note: (P) = Proposed

1.6 Summary

Business/LFR is identified in Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains PSP as the primary use for the WFCA and would comprise some 30.2ha of NDA as per the Land Use Budget prepared by UDM. In addition, the northern portion of Mt Atkinson MTC would comprise 6.3ha of NDA, as estimated by UDM. The PSP states that shop/leasable floorspace must not exceed 2,500m^2 for the portion of the MTC north of the rail corridor without a planning permit.

The WFCA is particularly suited for LFR uses in view of its accessibility and exposure to passing Western Freeway and Hopkins Road traffic, and strategic location adjacent Mt Atkinson MTC in the broader MGC.

The Hopkins Road Business Precinct UDF was approved by Melton City Council in 2022. While it includes significant provisions for LFR, the extent of growth in the WGC is anticipated to support substantial demand for LFR retailing in the region.

The MGC encompasses developing and/or future urban areas to the north and south of the Western Freeway in Melton LGA between Caroline Springs and the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) west of Melton township. Urban development in the MGC is primarily attributed to the delivery of PSP areas.

Higher-order centres in the balance of the MGC of relevance to this assessment include Melton (existing), a LFR node at Melton East and the planned Cobblebank MAC. These centres currently or will likely support LFR components.

Beyond the MGC, existing major centres and LFR locations of note include Caroline Springs, Watergardens, Hopper Crossing Bulky Goods Precinct, Maribyrnong Homemaker Precinct.

2.0 Melton Growth Corridor Regional Economic Context

This chapter provides a high-level overview of the MGC's regional economic context. Reference is made to population growth trends and forecasts, the population contribution of gazetted PSPs, residential building approval trends, the socio-economic and demographic profile, employment trends and forecasts, and non-residential building investment.

The MGC encompasses developing and future urban areas in Melton LGA between Caroline Springs and the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) west of Melton township, as previously noted.

2.1 Population Growth Trends and Forecasts

For the purpose of this assessment the MGC is considered to comprises the following small areas identified by id. Consulting:

- Northern Rural,
- Fraser Rise,
- Deanside – One
- Deanside - Two,
- Truganina - Ravenhall,
- Southern Rural,
- Eynesbury Township,
- Brookfield,
- Melton West,
- Harkness,
- Kurunjang,
- Melton,
- Melton South (Existing),
- Cobblebank - Strathtulloh,
- Thornhill Park,
- Rockbank,
- Fieldstone,
- Aintree,
- Grangefields,
- Bonnie Brook, and
- Hillside.

In 2024, the MGC is estimated to contain approximately 158,900 residents based on ABS Estimated Resident Population data. From 2021 to 2024, annual population growth averaged +11,860 persons (or +8.8% p.a.).

Over the 2025 to 2035 period, the MGC's population is forecast to increase by approximately +96,420 persons, representing annual growth of +9,640 residents (or +4.5% p.a.). At 2046 when the MGC is likely to be at or near full development, the corridor is forecast to accommodate in the order of 384,260 residents.

Population forecasts for the MGC are shown in Table 2.1 and take into account a range of information sources including ABS estimated resident population data, forecasts prepared by .id Consulting for the City of Melton.

Table 2.1 Melton Growth Corridor Population Trends and Forecasts, 2021 to 2035

	2021	2025	2030	2035	2025 to 2035
Population (no.)					
MGC	**123,320**	**173,210**	**222,590**	**269,630**	**+96,420**
City of Melton	181,350	235,640	293,320	345,430	+109,790
Average Annual Growth (no.)					
MGC		**+12,470**	**+9,880**	**+9,410**	**+9,640**
City of Melton		+13,570	+11,540	+10,420	+10,980
Average Annual Growth (%)					
MGC		**+8.9%**	**+5.1%**	**+3.9%**	**+4.5%**
City of Melton		+6.8%	+4.5%	+3.3%	+3.9%

Source: Forecast id (City of Melton, June 2025); Colliers Urban Planning

Note: Figures rounded

2.2 MGC Gazetted and Future Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs)

Population growth in the MGC will be primary driven by residential development in PSP areas.

Ten PSPs in the MGC have been gazetted that will contain a residential component. The indicative dwelling yield and resident population for these PSPs is shown in Table 2.2. Based on information provided in the completed PSP documents, current gazetted PSPs will collectively support around 69,490 dwellings and approximately 195,780 residents. Note, each of the completed PSPs assume an average household size of 2.8 persons which is considered conservative in view of recent household formation trends. Assuming an average household size of 3 persons, the estimated dwelling yield would support a population of approximately 208,500 persons.

Additionally, a further six residential-focussed PSPs are currently 'under preparation', 'unprogrammed' or in 'pre-commencement' and are anticipated to contribute to residential growth in the MGC in the longer term:

Under Preparation:

- Melton East

Pre-Commencement:

- Kororoit (Part 2)

Unprogrammed:

- Rockbank South
- Bulmans Road
- Melton West
- Warrensbrook

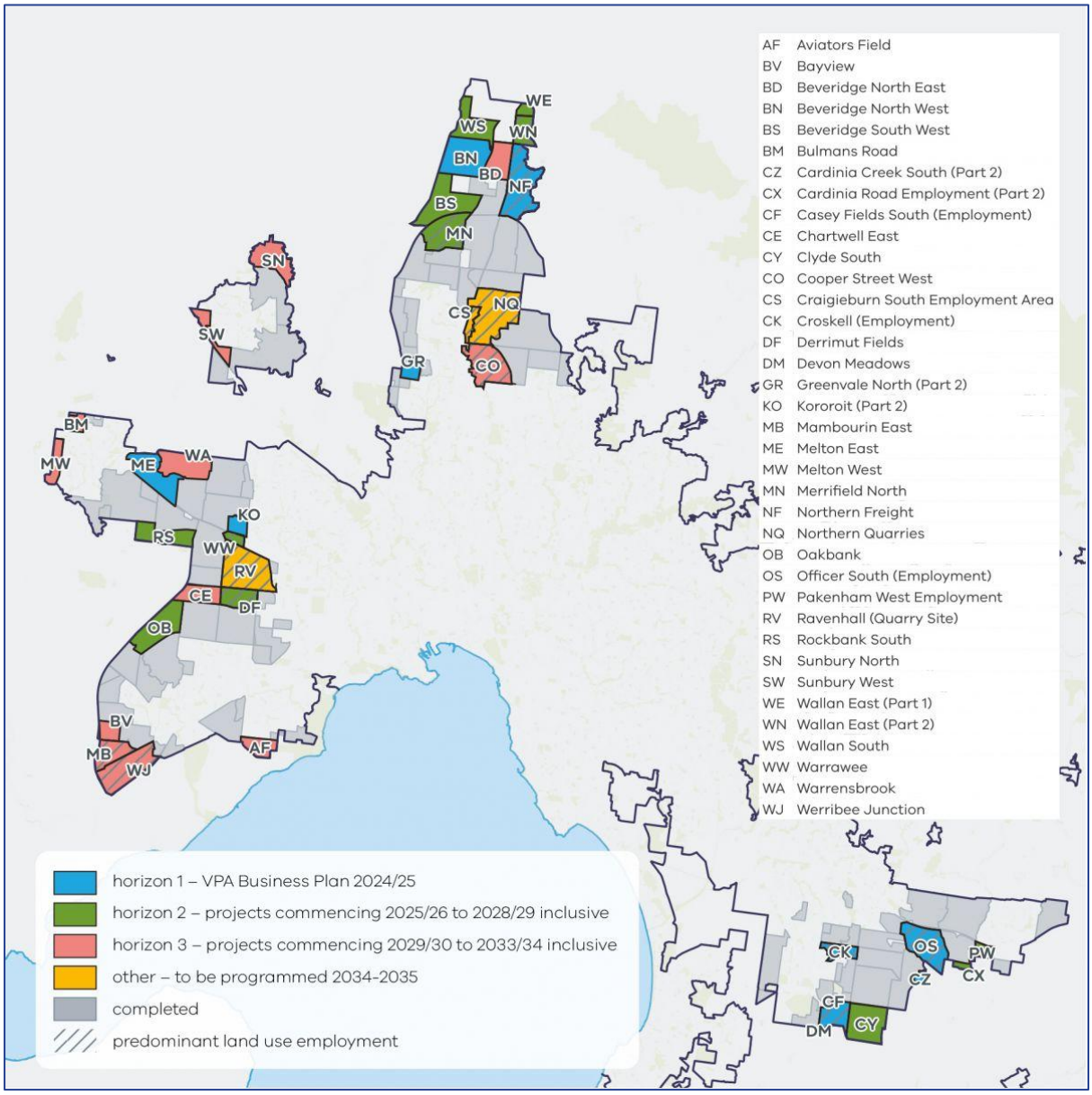
Table 2.2 MGC Completed PSPs Identified Dwelling Yield and Population Estimates

PSP	Indicative Dwelling Yield	Indicative Population
Gazetted PSPs		
Melton North	1,300	4,000
Toolern	19,434	55,000
Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains	8,000	22,400
Paynes Road	2,376	7,000
Plumpton	10,800	30,100
Rockbank	8,144	22,800
Rockbank North	7,300	20,400
Taylors Hill West	2,400	6,800
Toolern Park	534	1,480
Kororoit	9,200	25,800
Gazetted Sub-Total	*69,488*	*195,780*
Under Preparation PSPs		
Melton East	11,651	36,117
Under Preparation Sub-Total	*11,651*	*36,117*
Pre-Commencement PSPs		
Koroit (Part 2)	1,320	3,720
Pre-Commencement Sub-Total	*17,390*	*49,000*
Unprogrammed		
Rockbank South	6,990	19,690
Bulmans Road	2,470	6,960
Melton West	3,800	10,710
Warrensbrook	6,510	18,340
Unprogrammed Sub-Total	*12,780*	*36,010*
Total	**102,229**	**291,317**

Source: VPA, DELWP, Colliers Urban Planning

In late 2024, the state government provided an updated 10-year plan and framework for 27 growth area plans across Victoria. The new plan identifies various 'horizons' identifying the greenfield planning program and development pipeline, indicating three different horizons (see Figure 2.1 and Table 2.3).

Figure 2.1 A 10-year plan for Melbourne's Greenfields extract



Source: VPA

Table 2.3 Summary of 10-year plan for Melbourne's Greenfields

Horizon 1 VPA Business Plan 2024/25	**Horizon 2** Projects commencing 2025/26 – 2028/29	**Horizon 3** Projects commencing 2029/30 – 2033/34
Melton East	Rockbank South	Melton West
Kororoit (Part 2)	Warrawee	Warrensbrook
	Derrimut Fields	Chartwell East

Source: VPA

In addition, the recent Housing Targets (as set by Victorian Government) designate Melton to provide an additional +109,000 net new dwellings by 2051. The housing targets for Melton are to comprise 95.4% Greenfield development (+104,000 net new dwellings) and 4.6% Non-Greenfield development (+5,000 net new dwellings).

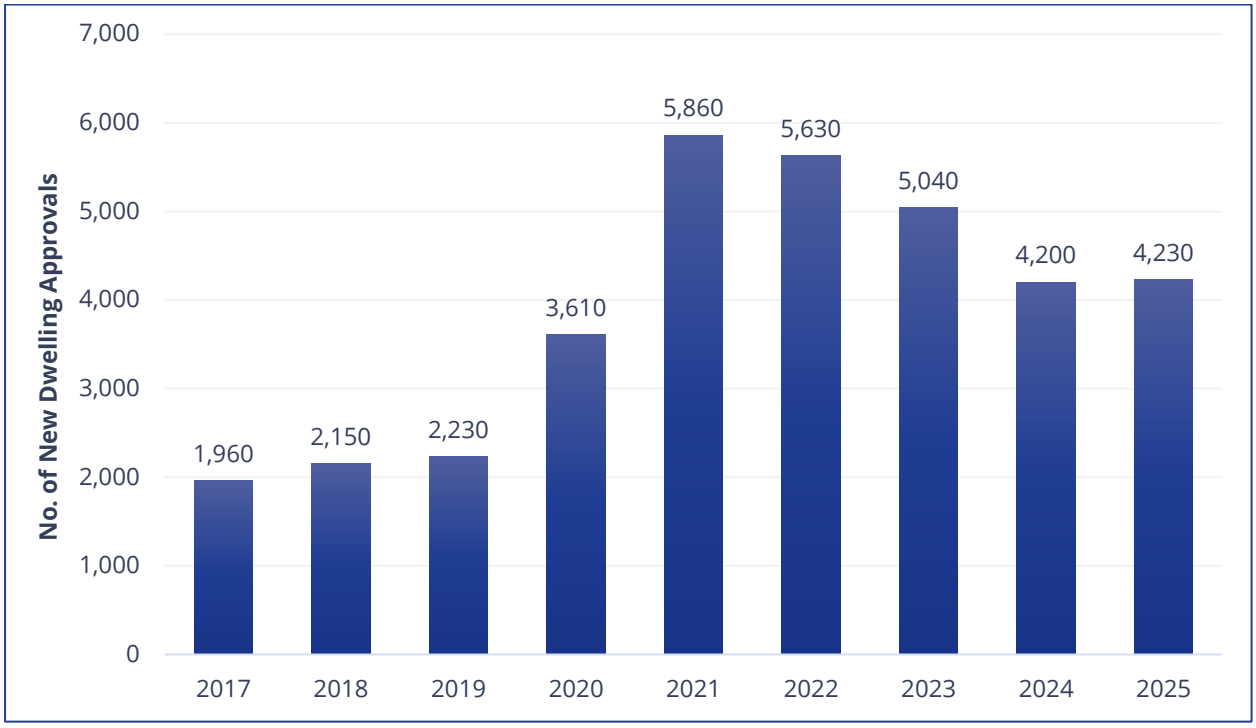
2.3 Residential Building Approvals

New dwelling approvals are an indicator of future dwelling demand and population growth. Dwelling approvals are also a very strong indicator of short-term demand for LFR, particularly in the homemaker retail sector. Construction of new dwellings generates demand for items such as home furnishings, DIY products, and trade related purchases.

New dwellings approvals data indicates MGC experienced an unprecedented rate of greenfield residential development subsequent to the emergence of COVID-19 as low interest rates combined with Government incentives stimulated the economy and supercharged the residential sector.

Approximately, 5,860 dwelling approvals were recorded in MGC in 2021 (year ending June), which was significantly above the pre-COVID-19 level (2,230 approvals in 2019). Dwelling approvals were slightly lower in 2022 and 2023 (at 5,630 and 5,040 approvals respectively) as the residential market slowed due to rising interest rates and other factors. This trend has continued to slow with 4,200 approvals in 2024 before steadying in 2025 at 4,230, although still significantly higher than pre-COVID-19.

Figure 2.2 Melton Growth Corridor – New Dwelling Approvals (Year ending June)



Source: ABS Building Approvals (8731.0)
Period: Financial Year

2.4 Demographic Characteristics

An overview of the socio-demographic profile of residents in the MGC from the 2021 Census is shown in Table 2.4 and compared to the Greater Melbourne average. Key findings include:

- **Median household incomes lower than the Greater Melbourne benchmark**. The Melton Growth Corridor had a median annual household income of $93,120, 6.9% lower than Greater Melbourne ($100,020).
- **Younger age structure in Melton Growth Corridor**. The Melton Growth Corridor had a median age of 31.8 years, younger than the Greater Melbourne benchmark of 37.1 years. The lower median age broadly reflects the appeal of the area for young families.
- **Diverse community**. A substantial proportion of residents in the Melton Growth Corridor were born overseas (29.7%), slightly higher than the Greater Melbourne average (29.5%). United Kingdom, New Zealand, India and Philippines were the main countries of origin for overseas born residents. Additionally, since 2006 the share of population born overseas has increased with this due to a significant increase in the share of persons born in India moving into the area.
- **Slightly higher share of household families**. The Melton Growth Corridor primarily comprises family orientated households (79.9%), higher than the Greater Melbourne benchmark of 70.9%. Couple families with children accounted for 43.9% of households, higher than the average for Greater Melbourne of 34.6%.
- **Approximately half of occupied households within Melton Growth Corridor are owned with a mortgage**. In-line with other similar growth areas, the share of private dwellings owned with a mortgage in the Melton Growth Corridor (52.7%) is significantly higher than the Greater Melbourne benchmark (37.8%).

Table 2.4 Melton Growth Corridor Socio-Demographic Profile, 2021

Category	Melton Growth Corridor	*Greater Melbourne*
Income		
Median individual income (annual)	$40,110	*$43,800*
Variation from Greater Melbourne median	*-8.4%*	*n.a.*
Median household income (annual)	$93,120	*$100,020*
Variation from Greater Melbourne median	*-6.9%*	*n.a.*
Age Structure		
0-4 years	8.9%	*5.9%*
5-19 years	21.7%	*17.8%*
20-34 years	23.7%	*22.7%*
35-64 years	36.6%	*38.5%*
65-84 years	8.6%	*13.0%*
85 years and over	0.5%	*2.0%*
Median Age (years)	31.8	*37.1*
Country of Birth		
Australia	65.2%	*64.1%*
Other Major English Speaking Countries	5.1%	*6.4%*
Other Overseas Born	29.7%	*29.5%*
% speak English only at home	*61.9%*	*64.7%*
Household Composition		
Couple family with no children	20.6%	*24.5%*
Couple family with children	43.9%	*34.6%*
Couple family - Total	64.4%	*59.2%*
One parent family	14.5%	*10.6%*
Other families	0.9%	*1.1%*
Family households - Total	79.9%	*70.9%*
Lone person household	18.1%	*24.8%*
Group household	2.0%	*4.2%*
Dwelling Structure (Occupied Private Dwellings)		
Separate house	92.6%	*68.0%*
Semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc.	6.7%	*16.2%*
Flat, unit or apartment	0.5%	*15.6%*
Other dwelling	0.3%	*0.3%*
Occupancy rate	*95.1%*	*90.0%*
Average household size	3.0	*2.6*
Tenure Type (Occupied Private Dwellings)		
Owned outright	21.4%	*30.4%*
Owned with a mortgage	52.7%	*37.8%*
Rented	25.3%	*30.3%*
Other tenure type	0.6%	*1.5%*
Housing Costs		
Median monthly mortgage repayment	$1,791	*$2,046*
Variation from Greater Melbourne median	*-12.5%*	*n.a.*
Median mortgage as a share of median household income	23.1%	*24.5%*
Median weekly rents	$349	*$400*
Variation from Greater Melbourne median	*-12.7%*	*n.a.*
Median rent as a share of median household income	19.5%	*20.8%*

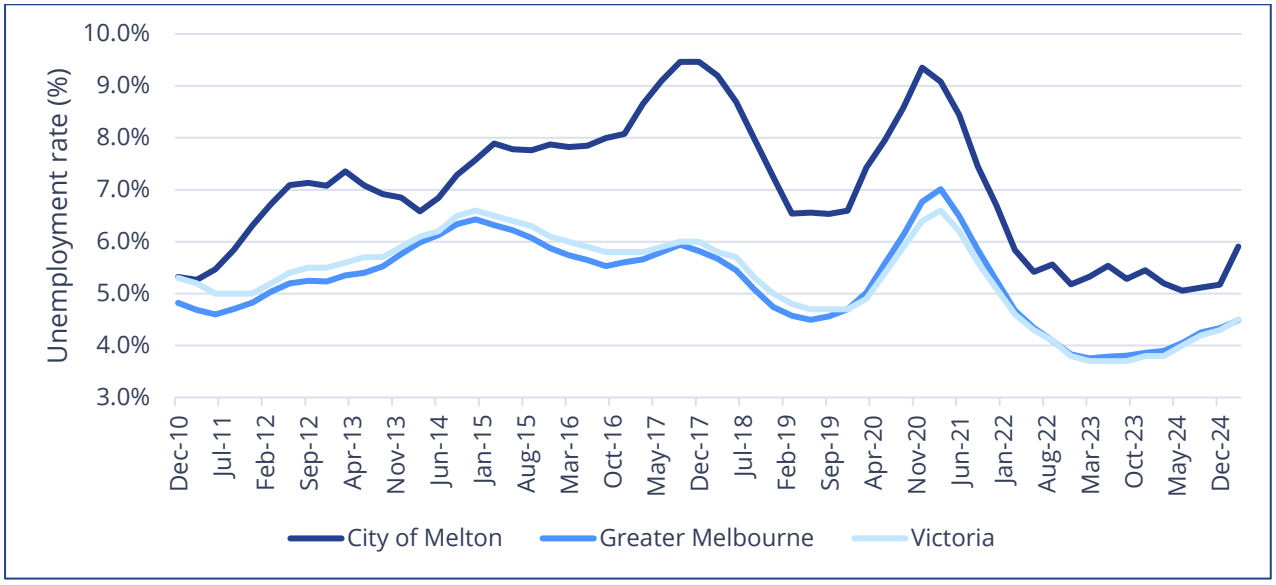
Source: ABS Census 2021

2.5 Employment Trends and Forecasts

Labour Force and Unemployment Trends

The Melton LGA has had a higher unemployment rate than Greater Melbourne. In March 2025 (latest available data), the Melton LGA had an unemployment rate of 5.9%, above both that of Greater Melbourne and Victoria (4.6% and 4.5%, respectively).

Figure 2.3 Melton LGA Unemployment Trends, December 2010 to March 2025



Source: Economy id

Future PSP Employment Generation

Historically, Melton LGA including the MGC had a low share of residents working locally and a higher unemployment rate when compared to Greater Melbourne and Victoria.

Plans for the 12 completed PSPs in the MGC indicate potential for more than 60,400 local ongoing jobs, noting that for several completed PSPs the anticipated jobs is not available. Refer Table 2.5.

Additionally, the Melton East PSP is currently under preparation and is anticipated to support 2,000 jobs according to the VPA. The major employment PSPs of Ravenhall (Quarry Site), Chartwell and Derrimut which are currently unprogrammed will also likely support significant employment in the long term.

Table 2.5 MGC Future Local Employment Opportunities

PSP	Jobs (no.)
Melton North	n/a
Toolern	25,000
Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains	18,950
Paynes Road	250
Plumpton	12,650
Rockbank	2,170
Rockbank North	n/a
Taylors Hill West	n/a
Toolern Park	n/a
Kororoit	1,400
Robinson Road Employment Area North	n/a
Robinson Road Employment Area South	n/a
Total	**60,420**

Source: VP Note: n/a = not available

2.6 Non-Residential Building Investment

A significant amount of non-residential development has taken place in the MGC, as highlighted by Table 2.6 which shows the value of non-residential development by building type.

This data shows that 13% (or $1,101 million) of non-residential building investment has been in commercial buildings between 2019 and 2025 (financial years). This has predominantly been centred on retail and wholesale trade buildings ($381 million, or 4.5%) and commercial buildings ($510 million, or 6%) over the 2019 to 2025 period. Until 2024, it is worth noting that the majority of this investment occurred in the retail and wholesale trade buildings sector. In 2025, however, there has been substantial investment in commercial buildings ($507 million in 2025, alone) as well as recent growth in office buildings. The recent increase in investment has been focused in the Cobblebank – Strathtulloh area.

In addition to commercial buildings and retail development, a total of approximately $1,622 million has been invested in industrial development of factories and warehouses in the period 2019 to 2025, representing 19.1% of total non-residential building investment.

Other non-residential buildings accounted for 68%, or $5,775 million investment over the 2019 to 2025 period. This category includes community facilities such as education, religion, aged care and heath buildings which ultimately reflects the current and future population growth that is being experienced in the MGC, and the supporting facilities and infrastructure that are required to support the expected short, medium and long-term population growth. This includes the new Melton Hospital which represents an investment of more than $900 million.

Table 2.6 Non-residential Building Investment, 2019 to 2025

Non-Residential Building Investment	Value of Total Works							2019 to 2025	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total (no.)	Share % of Total
Commercial Buildings									
Retail and Wholesale Trade Buildings	$12m	$160m	$30m	$12m	$43m	$94m	$31m	$381m	4.5%
Transport buildings	$23m	$0m	$0m	$0m	$0m	$14m	$70m	$108m	1.3%
Offices	$4m	$3m	$6m	$2m	$2m	$8m	$77m	$103m	1.2%
Commercial buildings n.e.c.	$0m	$0m	$2m	$0m	$0m	$1m	$507m	$510m	6.0%
Commercial Buildings - Total	$40m	$163m	$38m	$14m	$45m	$116m	$685m	$1,101m	13.0%
Industrial Buildings									
Factories and other secondary production buildings	$14m	$0m	$0m	$4m	$4m	$1m	$0m	$23m	0.3%
Warehouses	$66m	$105m	$213m	$34m	$443m	$271m	$251m	$1,384m	16.3%
Agricultural and aquacultural buildings	$0m	$0m	$3m	$0m	$0m	$92m	$0m	$97m	1.1%
Other industrial buildings n.e.c.	$26m	$0m	$2m	$40m	$41m	$6m	$2m	$118m	1.4%
Industrial Buildings - Total	$106m	$106m	$219m	$78m	$488m	$370m	$254m	$1,622m	19.1%
Other Non-Residential									
Education buildings	$29m	$48m	$67m	$92m	$154m	$83m	$333m	$807m	9.5%
Religion buildings	$3m	$6m	$7m	$4m	$10m	$14m	$3m	$48m	0.6%
Aged care facilities	$1m	$0m	$13m	$0m	$10m	$0m	$1m	$25m	0.3%
Health buildings	$0m	$2m	$1m	$5m	$2m	$6m	$1,253m	$1,268m	14.9%
Entertainment and recreation buildings	$19m	$35m	$8m	$11m	$10m	$25m	$28m	$136m	1.6%
Short term accommodation buildings	$0m	$2m	$1m	$2m	$3m	$6m	$5m	$19m	0.2%
Other non-residential n.e.c.	$14m	$8m	$248m	$199m	$25m	$45m	$46m	$585m	6.9%
Other Non-residential - Total	$67m	$100m	$346m	$313m	$214m	$179m	$1,670m	$2,888m	34.0%
Non-residential - Total	$133m	$199m	$691m	$626m	$428m	$358m	$3,340m	$5,775m	68.0%
Total	$279m	$469m	$948m	$719m	$961m	$844m	$4,279m	$8,498m	100.%

Source: Colliers Urban Planning; ABS Building Approvals by SA2 and above Cat: 8731

2.7 Summary

While new dwelling approvals in the MGC have slowed since the peak in 2021, they still remain elevated above pre-COVID-19 levels. This is driving strong rates of population growth which will be supported over the next 20 or more years by the release of greenfield residential land associated with the completion of numerous PSPs.

Residential construction and population growth are two key drivers of demand for retailing, particularly homemaker and large format retailing.

An expansion of local employment opportunities is also expected associated with the development of numerous town centres and employment areas.

3.0 Large Format Retail Assessment

This chapter provides an assessment of the demand for LFR at the WFCA taking into consideration the suitability of the site for such a use, forecast growth in population and spending within an identified trade area, and the existing and future competitive context.

3.1 Suitability of the WFCA for LFR

A large proportion of the WFCA has been identified for 'business/LFR' use. LFR retailing covers a wide variety of retailers but has a particularly strong focus in homemaker retailing.

The nature of LFR, where goods and merchandise are presented in stores with large floor areas and require land for significant car parking, means LFR centres and precincts require specific features in order to be successful.

Key features of successful LFR precincts include the following:

- High levels of exposure to passing traffic
- High levels of site accessibility
- Access to a regional catchment
- Sufficient size to accommodate a critical mass of retailers/businesses
- Flat, easily developed land.

A review of how the WFCA meets the above criteria is provided below:

- Exposure to passing traffic: The WFCA will be one of the most prominent sites to passing vehicular traffic in the MGC. The Western Freeway is the major east-west connection linking the existing urban areas of metropolitan Melbourne to the east and Melton and regional Victoria to the west. The WFCA will also have exposure to Hopkins Road.
- Accessibility to the site: Overall accessibility to the site is excellent. The WFCA is located at the planned intersection of the Western Freeway and Hopkins Road. In addition, the future OMR will improve accessibility to the site from the broader region.
- Access to a regional catchment: The WFCA is centrally located with respect to Melbourne's western growth corridor between Caroline Springs and Melton which is planned to accommodate approximately 370,000 residents when fully developed. Further analysis of the size of the trade area specific to LFR at the WFCA is provided later in this chapter.
- Sufficient size to accommodate a critical mass of retailers/businesses: The current master plan for the WFCA indicates potential for around 90,000m² of LFR floorspace at the WFCA. LFR centres typically require in the order of 20,000m² of floorspace (or 50,000m² of land assuming a 40% development efficiency) in order to accommodate the critical mass of retailers/businesses that would make the centre a retail destination. In this context, the WFCA is considered to be of sufficient size to accommodate a substantial LFR centre.
- Flat and easily developable land: Due to the floorplate requirements of large format retailers and the need for competitive development costs, large format retail centres generally require flat and easily developable land.

In addition, the WFCA provides various other features that would be seen as a positive for large format retailers, including:

- Proximity to future Mt Atkinson train station: In the past, locating adjacent to a train station was not a major consideration for LFR, with this form of retailing being largely car reliant. However, as technology and consumer shopping behaviours change, the reliance on cars to access LFR nodes is likely to decline. Where customers used to rely on a car to transport goods home, LFR now provide an expansive range of services including home-delivery and online purchase options.
- Central to significant areas of residential development activity: The surrounding area will be subject to significant residential development activity over the next 20 or more years. New housing construction is a key driver for the homemaker retail market as new residents purchase bulky goods items for their new homes. In addition, new housing construction is also a key driver of trade-related sales associated with hardware and trade supplies stores.
- Proximity to significant employment areas: The Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains PSP is forecast to accommodate in the order of 18,950 jobs, providing opportunities for workers to purchase items after work and for businesses which serve business supplies (e.g. Officeworks).
- Proximity to a Major Town Centre: Mt Atkinson MTC will offer a range of opportunities for higher intensity TOD / Mixed-Use development comprising of retail, food, allied health and commercial uses. These will all assist in attracting potential LFR customers to the precinct.

Having regard for the above, the WFCA is supported by strong locational characteristics for LFR.

The Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains PSP also identifies potential for LFR at the area identified as the Hopkins Road Business Precinct and in the eastern part of the Mt Atkinson MTC UDF. While these precincts also possesses locational features that support LFR, the WFCA is considered to be a strong competitive location due to its greater level of exposure and accessibility to the Western Freeway and connectivity to the Mt Atkinson MTC.

3.2 Large Format Retail Trends

Like the retail sector more broadly, the LFR sector is dynamic and constantly evolving to meet changing consumers trends. A selection of relevant trends influencing the LFR sector are discussed below.

Large Format Retail Experiencing Strong Leasing Activity

Despite the wider retail sector struggling in recent years, LFR is experiencing strong interest and commitment from developers, managers and operators, maintaining its reputation as one of the stronger performing asset classes. According to the Large Format Retailers Association (LFRA), national sales of LFR goods were approximately $102.3 billion in the year to 30 June 2024, representing 24% of all retail sales in Australia.

Vacancy rates in LFR centres across Australia increased slightly in 2024/25, but remain low at around 3%. However, the construction of new LFR centres remains at an all-time low, making the sector an attractive investment.

Out with 'Bulky Goods' and in with 'Lifestyle'

LFR centres have been experiencing a change in tenancy mix, highlighted by a trend of conventional 'big box'; LFR centres diversifying their land use mix to offer a broader range of 'lifestyle' retailing and other commercial uses (such as supermarkets, gyms, childcare centres, children's play centres and co-working space). A key driver of shifts toward more diversified LFR nodes is the occupancy and viability benefits that

come with increased activity levels throughout the entire week, noting that LFR centres traditionally support elevated levels of activity on weekends.

An example of a recently developed large format retail centre with a focus towards 'lifestyle' is the Ouson Plaza in Springvale, Melbourne. Ouson Plaza contains a tenancy mix including The Good Guys, ALDI, Bottlemart, McDonald's, Gym, Best Friends Pet Supply Store, and an Italian restaurant.

According to the LFRA, other non-traditional LFR retail tenants accounted for 18.4% of centre floorspace in 2024/25, up from 11.6% in 2013/14.

The trends highlighted above reinforce the need for LFR to be at locations with suitable attributes and the ability to support a range of broader retail and commercial uses.

3.3 WFCA LFR Trade Area

A trade area is the geographic area from which a centre will draw consistent and significant levels of sales. Often, trade areas are divided into what are called 'Primary' and 'Secondary' trade areas. This definition helps to reflect the fact that the degree of sales will vary within the trade area. Combined, these Primary and Secondary trade areas constitute the Main Trade Area (MTA) and reflect the overall size of the market that is to be served, except for passing trade and other sales generated by non-trade area residents.

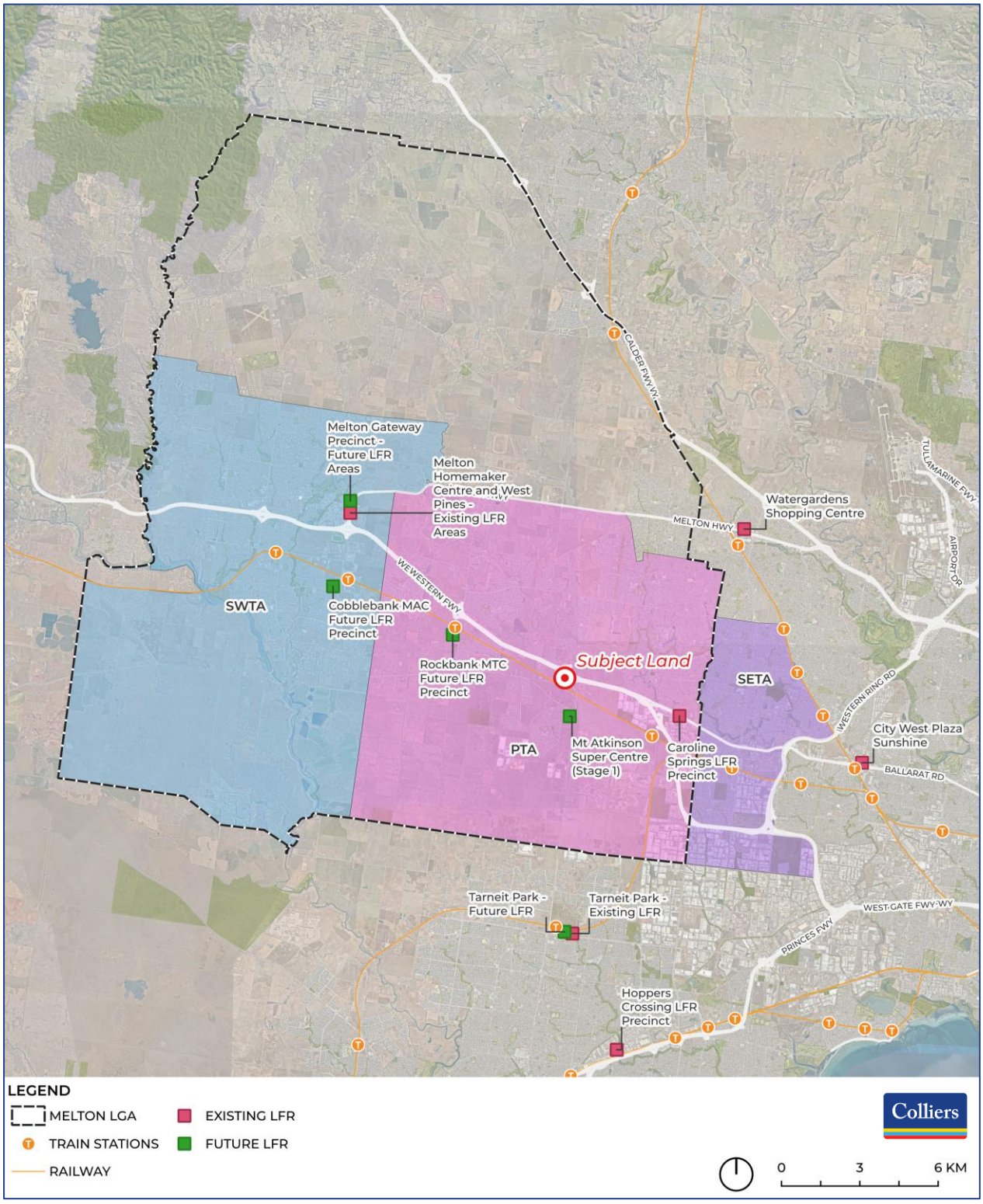
In this instance, a MTA for LFR at the subject land has been defined by considering:

- Local road network and accessibility of the site from the surrounding region
- The location, function and relative attractiveness of other LFR centres or precincts (refer Section 3.4)
- The region's topographical features (rivers, spares farmland etc) that create natural barriers to, and influences on, site access
- Surrounding urban development patterns.

The MTA is shown in Figure 3.1 and comprises following sectors:

- **Primary Trade Area (PTA)**, bounded by the Melton Highway to the north, Mount Derrimut and Station Road in the east, Boundary Road to the south and Mount Cottrell Road to the west. The gazetted PSPs in the PTA include Plumpton, Rockbank, Rockbank North, Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains, Taylors Hill West, Toolern, Toolern Park and Kororoit.
- **A Secondary East Trade Area (SETA)**, which comprises (in part) the suburbs of Deer Park, Derrimut, Cairnlea and St Albans in Brimbank LGA with the boundary identified as Taylors Road to the north, the Western Ring Road to the east, Boundary Road to the south and Mount Derrimut and Station Road in the west.
- **A Secondary West Trade Area (SWTA)**, which is located west of Mount Cottrell Road and encompassing the urban area of Melton and Eynesbury with the Melton municipal boundary also the boundary for the trade to the south and west.

Figure 3.1 Main Trade Area Large Format Retail Competition, Existing and Proposed



Source: Ethos Urban using Mapinfo and OpenStreetMaps; various published sources, field visits

3.4 Competitive Context

An overview of competing LFR centres and precincts both within and beyond the MTA is provided below.

Centres Within Main Trade Area

Hopkins Road Business Precinct

The Hopkins Road Business Precinct is a new employment precinct that is identified in the Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains Precinct Structure Plan (PSP). The Precinct is situated along the northern end of Hopkins Road at the intersection with Grand Boulevard, some 1.5km south of the WFCA. The Hopkins Road Business Precinct is designated to provide office, commercial and large format retail, Industrial and light industrial opportunities.

The Mt Atkinson Super Centre (Stage 1) is situated within the Hopkins Road Business Precinct. This centre is currently a proposed development, with an anticipated opening date in the first quarter of 2026 (LFRA Directory 2024-2025). Recent satellite imagery from Nearmap (October 28, 2025) indicates that the site remains in the initial stages of construction, with land preparation underway for development, with the projected opening date likely to be postponed. Upon completion, initial details for the Mt Atkinson Super Centre (Stage 1) specify that this centre will provide approximately 10,680m^2 of large format retail floorspace to the Hopkins Road Business Precinct.

Caroline Springs LFR Precinct

Caroline Springs LFR precinct is located at the intersection of Ballarat Road and Panamax Road approximately 4.5km south-west of the WFCA. The centre comprises an Officeworks, Fantastic Furniture, Petbarn and primarily serves the urban area of Caroline Springs and surrounds. The precinct also includes a Bunnings Warehouse on the southern side of Ballarat Road.

Burnside Park Hub is also located within this LFR precinct on the northern side of the Western Highway and includes Savers, JB Hi-Fi, Baby Bunting and Spotlight.

In total, the Caroline Springs LFR Precinct contains approximately 36,220m^2 of occupied floorspace. There are no vacancies in this precinct according the current LFRA directory (2024/2025).

Melton Gateway Precinct

The Melton Gateway Precinct includes the following centre located to the east of the Melton Township:

- Melton Homemaker Centre: A precinct accommodating a mix of showroom and LFR traders is located at the intersection of Melton Highway and High Street to the south-east of Melton, approximately 10km north-west of the WFCA and adjacent the developing West Pines precinct. In total, the Melton Homemaker Centre precinct contains approximately 27,740m^2 of floorspace including 22,360m^2 of LFR floorspace (according to the LFRA Director 2024/25), including the Harvey Norman, Fantastic Furniture,

Forty Winks, Snooze, Best Friends, Dulux, as well as a Chemist Warehouse, McDonalds, Anytime Fitness and a EG Ampol Petrol Station.

- West Pines: Another large format retail precinct is located at Melton Highway and High Street in the south-east of Melton, approximately 10km north-west of the WFCA. The centre which was initially operational with a Bunnings Warehouse covering 18,000m^2 of floorspace. Recent development has expanded the centre to a total 37,100m^2 including 27,290m^2 of LFR floorspace. Tenants include AutoBarn, Repco, Supercheap Auto, Officeworks, BCF, Petbarn and some smaller tenants such as fast-food restaurants.
- Melton Mega Centre: The planned Melton Mega Centre has been approved for development after the application was sent to VCAT. The centre will be located along Federation Drive to the south-east of central Melton and is approved to accommodate approximately 50,000m² of LFR and complete the Melton Gateway precinct. At this stage no further details regarding its progress are available.

Melton Homemaker Centre

West Pines

Melton Mega Centre (Impression only)

Centres Beyond the Main Trade Area

Watergardens Super Centres and McCubbins Gardens

- The Watergardens Super Centres and McCubbins Gardens LFR precincts are located along the Melton Highway adjacent the Watergardens Town Centre approximately 8.5km north-east of the WFCA.
- These three centres combined are recognised as one of the most significant LFR clusters in Melbourne's west. The Watergardens Super Centres supports over 20 LFR stores including national brands such as Harvey Norman, Good Guys, Anaconda, Petbarn, Carpet Call, Bedshed, Anytime Fitness BCF, and Plush, across some 17,000m^2 of LFR floorspace. Further, Bunnings covers a significant portion of the land at the Super Centre 1 with the store containing in the order of 12,000m^2 of floorspace.
- The McCubbins Gardens Centre has approximately 6,300m^2 of floorspace across five LFR stores with key retailers including Repco, Nick Scali, Baby Bunting, Lombard the Paper People and PETstock.

Tarneit Park Hub (Leakes Road Precinct)

Tarneit Park Hub is a developing commercial development in the Truganina PSP area to the south of the planned Tarneit MTC. It is anchored by an existing constructed Bunnings (currently the only retailer at the site) and has the potential to accommodate approximately 7,900m^2 of additional LFR floorspace. LFR and generic retail tenancies are currently under construction for future tenants such as Petstock, mycar, Repco and Fernwood fitness, according to the Centre's website.

Sunshine Square

Rebranded as Sunshine Square, this centre accommodates two national brand large format retailers: Harvey Norman and Total Tools. The Centre is located at the intersection of Ballarat and McIntyre Road, which is approximately 12km east of the WFCA. The two national retailers occupy a total of 10,140m² of the total floorspace at Sunshine Square (22,390m^2) and includes other tenants such as Petbarn and Supercheap Auto. To the east of Sunshine Square is Bunnings Sunshine with a total floorspace of 13,700m².

Summary

The development of LFR at the WFCA will compete with other retailers and destinations for a share of trade area retail spending. These centres include major LFR centres of regional significance, and smaller LFR hubs, typically at main road locations.

A summary of LFR developments that could compete with new facilities delivered at the subject land are shown by Table 3.1below and Figure 3.1 on page 40.

Table 3.1 Summary of Existing and Planned LFR Centres

Centre	LFR Floorspace (m²)	Distance from Subject land (km)	Selection of Major Tenants
Primary Trade Area			
Mt Atkinson Super Centre (Stage 1) within *Hopkins Road Business Precinct*	10,680 (Stage 1)	1.5	Proposed
Caroline Springs LFR Precinct	36,220	4.5	Officeworks, Fantastic Furniture, Petbarn, Bunnings, JB Hif Fi, Baby Bunting, Spotlight
Rockbank MTC LFR Precinct	10,000 (Indicative only)		Planned
Cobblebank MAC LFR Precinct	10,000 (Indicative only)		Planned
Secondary Trade Areas			
Melton Gateway Precinct			
Melton Mega Centre	50,000	10	Planned
Melton Homemaker Centre	22,360	10	Harvey Norman, The Good Guys, Forty Winks, Supercheap Auto, Chemist Warehouse, PetO Melton, Duluxe, Fantastic Furniture, Snooze
West Pines	27,290	10	Bunnings, BCF, Officeworks, Beacon Lighting, Repco, Petbarn, Fantastic Variety, Supercheap Auto, AutoBarn
Beyond Main Trade Area			
Watergardens Super Centre	29,762	8.5	Bunnings, The Good Guys, Total Tools, Bevmarks, Plush, Petbarn, Anaconda, BCF, Carpet Call
McCubbin Gardens Taylors Lakes	6,288	8.5	Nick Scali, Repco, PETstock, Baby Bunting
Tarneit Park Hub (Leakes Road Precinct)	16,480 (51,700)	9.5	Bunnings, Repco, Autobarn, PetStock
Sunshine Square	22,393	12	Harvey Norman, Petbarn, Supercheap Auto, Total Tools
Bunnings Sunshine	13,700	13	Bunnings

Source: various published sources, field visits. Note: Figures rounded; ( ) = Total LFR floorspace at full

3.5 Trade Area Population Trends and Forecast

In 2024, the MTA is estimated to have a population of approximately 262,340 persons, having increased by approximately +73,240 persons since 2016. Population growth over this period has been concentrated predominately in the PTA (+45,680 persons). Whereas, the SETA experienced a slight decline in population over this period, assumed to be attributed to a population rebound after population loss over COVID-19 while also being an established urban area.

By 2025, the MTA population is forecast to be approximately 277,870 persons, representing an increase of +15,530 persons on the 2024 population. Population growth is forecast to be strongest in the PTA and SWTA as significant residential development continues in various housing estates.

Beyond 2025, population growth is projected to continue across the MTA (refer Table 3.2). Population growth in both the PTA and SWTA will continue to be the major drivers for the MTA, with both projected to experience significant growth; the PTA population is forecast to increase by +6,620 persons per annum between 2025 to 2040, while the SWTA is expected to grow by around +3,590 persons per annum over the same period.

Population trends and forecasts have been estimated using ABS Estimated Resident Population (ERP) data for historical figures, with forecast population based on growth identified by id. Consultants for the Melton City Council and the City of Brimbank (June 2025 and June 2024, respectively).

Overall, the MTA is expected to experience significant ongoing population for the foreseeable future.

Table 3.2 Main Trade Area Population Trends and Forecasts, 2016 to 2040

	2016	2021	2025	2030	2035	2040	2016-2025	2025-2040
Population								
PTA	60,270	80,860	117,330	154,030	186,130	216,600	57,060	99,270
SETA	67,740	66,430	66,780	69,040	70,740	73,050	-960	6,270
SWTA	61,090	77,890	93,760	112,170	131,110	147,570	32,670	53,810
MTA	***189,100***	***225,180***	***277,870***	***335,240***	***387,980***	***437,220***	***88,770***	***159,350***
Average Annual Growth (no.)								
PTA		+4,120	+9,120	+7,340	+6,420	+6,090	+6,340	+6,620
SETA		-260	+90	+450	+340	+460	-110	+420
SWTA		+3,360	+3,970	+3,680	+3,790	+3,290	+3,630	+3,590
MTA		***+7,220***	***+13,170***	***+11,470***	***+10,550***	***+9,850***	**+9,863**	**+10,620**
Average Annual Growth (%)								
PTA		+6.1%	+9.8%	+5.6%	+3.9%	+3.1%	+7.7%	+4.2%
SETA		-0.4%	+0.1%	+0.7%	+0.5%	+0.6%	-$0.2%	+0.6%
SWTA		+5.0%	+4.7%	+3.7%	+3.2%	+2.4%	+4.9%	+3.1%
MTA		***+3.6%***	***+5.4%***	***+3.8%***	***+3.0%***	***+2.4%***	***+4.4%***	***+3.1%***

Source: Ethos Urban; ABS Cat: 3218.0; Id. Consulting, June 2024 and June 2025

3.6 LFR Retail Spending Forecasts

Estimates of retail spending have been prepared with reference to the CommBank iQ retail spending estimates. Estimates are based on observable electronic (e.g. credit/debit card) spending data based on total spending undertaken by residents over a 12-month period. They have subsequently been adjusted to account for cash payments and buy now, pay later purchases to ensure the accuracy of capturing total market spending.

Estimates of average per capita retail spending for MTA residents are applied to the population forecasts. In addition, real growth is applied to per capita spending estimates that reflects long-term industry average which represents approximately 1% per annum for total retail spending. Retail spending forecasts are provided in constant 2025 dollars.

Retail spending forecasts for each of the trade area sectors are provided in Table 3.3 and provide forecasts of spending on the following categories:

- Large Format Retailing, which for the purpose of this assessment includes bulky goods spending from household; leisure; and general merchandise. Not all LFR spending is directed to LFR centres or precincts, with a share of this spending also directed to traditional retail centres.
- Other Retail, which includes supermarket, fresh food, liquor and other food & groceries; food catering; apparel; retail services (e.g. hairdressing and beauty services); and discount department stores.

Total spending on LFR categories by MTA residents is forecast to increase from $1,057.3 million in 2025 to approximately $1,353.2 million in 2030 (in constant 2025 dollars) and reach $1,9691 million by 2040.

In the PTA, total LFR spending in 2025 is estimated at $488.5 million, with this forecast to increase to $1,251.3 million by 2045.

Note, all spending figures in this analysis are inclusive of GST and in constant 2025 dollars (exclude the effects of price inflation). Also note that the figures represent total retail spending by households in the MTA, inclusive of traditional spending at so-called 'bricks and mortar' retail shops; retail spending with a mix of internet sales channels where a physical retail outlet is responsible for product pick-up or delivery (so-called 'clicks and mortar' retailing); internet-only sales channels.

Note, the above analysis considers spending by permanent residents of the MTA only. Some additional demand will also be generated by people living beyond the MTA and by visitors, and this is considered in the analysis later in this chapter.

Table 3.3 Main Trade Area Retail Spending Forecasts, 2025 to 2040 ($2025)

Retail Category	2025	2030	2035	2040
Primary Trade Area				
Household	$204.0m	$281.4m	$357.4m	$437.1m
Leisure	$100.1m	$138.1m	$175.5m	$214.6m
General	$184.4m	$254.4m	$323.2m	$395.2m
Large Format Retailing	**$488.5m**	**$674.0m**	**$856.0m**	**$1,047.0m**
Other Retail	**$1,210.5m**	**$1,645.8m**	**$2,060.2m**	**$2,483.4m**
Total Retail	**$1,699.0m**	**$2,319.8m**	**$2,916.2m**	**$3,530.4m**
Secondary East Trade Area				
Household	$82.5m	$89.7m	$96.6m	$104.8m
Leisure	$43.3m	$47.0m	$50.6m	$55.0m
General	$84.6m	$92.0m	$99.0m	$107.5m
Large Format Retailing	**$210.4m**	**$228.7m**	**$246.2m**	**$267.3m**
Other Retail	**$531.7m**	**$569.1m**	**$603.7m**	**$645.5m**
Total Retail	**$742.1m**	**$797.8m**	**$849.9m**	**$912.7m**
Secondary West Trade Area				
Household	$139.6m	$175.6m	$215.7m	$255.2m
Leisure	$77.7m	$97.7m	$120.0m	$142.0m
General	$141.0m	$177.3m	$217.8m	$257.6m
Large Format Retailing	**$358.3m**	**$450.5m**	**$553.5m**	**$654.8m**
Other Retail	**$896.8m**	**$1,110.8m**	**$1,344.2m**	**$1,566.6m**
Total Retail	**$1,255.2m**	**$1,561.3m**	**$1,897.6m**	**$2,221.3m**
Main Trade Area				
Household	$426.1m	$546.7m	$669.7m	$797.1m
Leisure	$221.1m	$282.9m	$346.1m	$411.5m
General	$410.0m	$523.7m	$640.0m	$760.3m
Large Format Retailing	**$1,057.3m**	**$1,353.2m**	**$1,655.8m**	**$1,969.0m**
Other Retail	**$2,639.0m**	**$3,325.7m**	**$4,008.0m**	**$4,695.4m**
Total Retail	**$3,696.3m**	**$4,678.9m**	**$5,663.8m**	**$6,664.4m**

Source: Colliers Urban Planning with CommBank IQ

3.7 Demand for LFR Floorspace in the MTA

An assessment of the demand for LFR floorspace has been undertaken based on the forecast MTA population in 2040 and the application of industry benchmarks sourced from the LFRA. The LFRA is the peak national association for Australia's LFR sector accounts for more than 35% of retail floorspace in Australia and includes:

- Automotive parts & accessories (e.g. Autobarn, Burson, Repco, Supercheap Auto)
- Coverings including floor and curtain and blinds (e.g. Carpet Call, Choices, Kresta)
- Electrical (e.g. Betta Electrical, JB Hi-fi, Harvey Norman)
- Furniture (e.g. Fantasic Furniture, Forty Winks, Adairs)
- Hardware and Garden (e.g. Bunnings, Mitre 10)
- Homewares (e.g. Adairs, Beacon Lighting, Spotlight)
- Other large format retailers including those selling pet supplies, office supplies, sporting and outdoor goods (e.g. Amart Sports, Anaconda, BCF, Petbarn).

The industry benchmarks used as a basis for this assessment rely on information prepared for the LFRA by JBA/Ethos Urban (now Colliers Urban Planning) and Deep End Services (Large Format Retail in NSW, 2015) as well as other information sourced from the LFRA.

Demand for LFR by MTA Residents

According to the LFRA, a total 19.9 million square metres of occupied LFR floorspace existed throughout Australia in 2020. This represented an average of 0.77m^2 per capita, nationally.

Applying this benchmark to the forecast population in the MTA in 2040 of approximately 437,220 persons indicates MTA residents would generate demand for approximately 336,660m^2 of LFR floorspace. This floorspace could be supported anywhere, including LFR precincts and traditional retail centres located both within and beyond the MTA.

Demand for LFR Floorspace in LFR Centres/Precincts by MTA Residents

According to the LFRA, approximately 20% of LFR occurs within shopping centres or as part of traditional activity centres and shopping strips. The balance is in dedicated homemaker centres, homemaker precincts or in areas zoned for industrial purposes.

Assuming 80% of demand for LFR floorspace is directed to LFR centres/precincts, such as that planned at the WFCA, this equates to demand by MTA residents for approximately 269,330m^2 of retail floorspace in LFR centres/precincts. Once again, this could be accommodated in centres/precincts in the MTA and locations further afield.

Demand for LFR Floorspace in LFR Centres/Precincts in the MTA, by MTA Residents

The MTA population in 2040 of more than 437,000 residents is sufficient to:

- Support multiple LFR precincts/centres and attract interest from major national brand large format retailers
- Provide a level of destinational appeal sufficient to enable retailers to capture a relatively high market share.

On this basis, it would be reasonable to expect that at least 75% of demand for LFR floorspace by MTA residents could be retained in the MTA, with the balance locating in centres further afield.

Based on a market share of 75%, estimated demand by MTA residents exists for approximately 200,000m^2 of LFR floorspace in the MTA, by MTA residents.

Total Demand for LFR Floorspace in Centres/Precincts in the MTA

In addition to demand from MTA residents, LFR retailers would also expect to capture spending from non-MTA residents, including residents located beyond the MTA and from businesses.

Assuming at least 20% of demand for LFR floorspace in the MTA could be derived from beyond MTA, total estimated demand for LFR floorspace in dedicated centres/precincts is estimated to be in the order of 250,000m^2.

Refer Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Demand for LFR Floorspace in MTA, 2040

Category	2040
MTA Population	437,220
Estimated demand for LFR floorspace per capita	0.77
Demand for LFR floorspace by MTA residents	336,660
Demand for LFR floorspace in LFR centres/precincts (assuming 80%)	269,330
LFR floorspace demand in MTA LFR centres/precincts by MTA (assuming a market share of 75%)	202,000
Demand for LFR floorspace in the MTA LFR centres/precinct (assuming 20% derived from beyond the MTA)	**252,500**

Source: Large Format Retail Association; Ethos Urban

3.8 Opportunity for LFR at the WFCA

As noted above, by 2040 forecast demand for LFR floorspace in the MTA is estimated to be in the order of 250,000m^2.

Currently, the MTA supports approximately 86,000m^2 of floorspace in LFR precincts, namely the Caroline Springs LFR precinct, the Melton Homemaker Centre and the West Pine Centre. In addition, it is understood plans for approximately 80,000m^2 of LFR floorspace exist including approximately 50,000m^2 in the Melton Mega Centre and 10,000m^2 at Mt Atkinson Super Centre (Stage 1). It has been assumed around 20,000m^2 of LFR will be delivered at the Cobblebank Metropolitan Centre and the Rockbank Major Town Centre.

Having regard for the forecast demand for LFR floorspace and the existing and planned supply in the MTA, potential exists for approximately an additional +86,500m^2 of LFR floorspace by 2040.

Table 3.5 summarises the above analysis.

Table 3.5 Demand for LFR Floorspace at WFCA, 2041

Category	2040
Demand for LFR floorspace in MTA	252,500m^2
Existing LFR floorspace in MTA	85,870m^2
Planned/approved LFR floorspace in MTA	80,000m^2
Total Existing and Planned	165,870m^2
Demand for additional LFR in MTA, 2040	**86,630m^2**

Source: Colliers Urban Planning

The WFCA is ideally situated, for reasons identified earlier in this report, to accommodate a significant proportion of this floorspace. The above analysis does not take into consideration the potential for LFR at the Hopkins Road Business Precinct (apart from the Mt Atkinson Super Centre (Stage 1) or land identified for LFR in the Mt Atkinson MTC UDF, of which there is likely to also be some form of LFR. However, sufficient demand exists to accommodate multiple LFR precincts in the Mt Atkinson area., although noting that the WFCA should be considered the primary location for LFR retailing in this broader area given its site characteristics, and its strategic location adjoining the northern part of the Mt Atkinson Major Town Centre.

3.9 Implications

The WFCA is ideally situated to be the primary LFR precinct serving the MGC. Its central location to the growth corridor and high-levels of exposure and accessibility to the Melton Freeway and Hopkins Road are key features that would be attractive to major LFR brands.

Having regard for future population growth and industry benchmarks, as well as existing and planned competition, by 2040 potential demand for almost an additional 90,000m^2 of LFR floorspace is forecast in the MGC. The WFCA is ideally suited to accommodate a significant share of this forecast demand in floorspace.

Given the WFCA's location attributes, and its strategic location adjoining the northern part of the Mt Atkinson Major Town Centre, the WFCA should be considered as the primary location for LFR in the Mt Atkinson area.

4.0 Town Centre Land Use Opportunities

This chapter provides an overview of the traditional 'town centre' opportunities that may be suited to the WFCA, particularly the land designated as the portion of Mt Atkinson MTC to the north of the railway line.

4.1 Land Use Planning Framework

The Mt Atkinson MTC is located on land affected by Schedule 9 of the Urban Growth Zone (UGZ). As outlined in the PSP, the portion of the MTC located to the north of the railway line will have a small-scale retail/service function once the train station is completed.

To ensure this northern area provides small-scale retail/services, and maintain consistency with the Melton retail hierarchy, a 'soft cap' of 2,500m² of 'shop' floorspace has been applied to the Mt Atkinson MTC land to the north of the rail line.

The balance of the MTC will be situated to the south of the rail line and be the 'core' retail area, according to the PSP. This area will also be affected by Schedule 9 of the UGZ. A much larger soft cap applies to the southern MTC under the UGZ9 where development of shop floorspace under 23,500m² does not require a planning permit. Note, the Mt Atkinson MTC UDF proposes to increase this to 40,000m^2. This larger cap has likely been applied to assist on this portion of the MTC attracting anchor retailers that are consistent with its 'core retail' role.

Uses that are identified as Section 1 (permit not required) of Clause 34.01-1 of the Melton Planning Scheme and are relevant to the MTC include:

- Shop
- Accommodation
- Arts and Craft Centre
- Child care centre
- Cinema
- Community care accommodation
- Education centre (other than child care centre)
- Exhibition centre
- Home based business
- Informal outdoor recreation
- Office
- Place of worship
- Railway
- Rooming house
- Tramway.

It is outlined in the PSP that before deciding on an application to use land for a 'shop' on land identified in the Mt Atkinson MTC, in addition to the decision guidelines at Clause 37.07-14 of the Melton Planning Scheme, the responsible authority must consider, as appropriate:

- The local catchment and PSP catchment demand for the additional floor area
- The effect on existing and future major town centres within the City of Melton
- The extent to which the use of land for a shop on land to the north of the rail corridor might prejudice the development, expansion or operation of the retail core to the south of the rail corridor.

The concept plan for the MTC as outlined in the PSP is shown at Figure 4.1 and provides an indication of the potential land uses and layout of the centre, including areas to the north of the railway line. This plan includes a small anchor tenant (possibly a supermarket), and a component of ground floor retail with

potentially residential above. A pedestrian overpass/underpass is planned to connect the northern and southern parts of the MTC.

Table 4.1 Mt Atkinson MTC Concept Plan

Source: Mt Atkinson MTC Concept Plan

4.2 Key Considerations

When planning for uses in the WFCA, particularly town centre type uses, it would be prudent to consider the following:

- Planned uses in the Mt Atkinson MTC to the south of the railway line
- Experience of other MTCs dissected by railway lines
- The role of retail and other uses in the northern part of the MTC.

An overview of the above considerations is provided below.

Planned Uses in the Southern Portion Mt Atkinson MTC

The PSP provides guidance on the future uses in the MTC and indicates the potential for supermarkets, discount department stores, speciality retail and a food and beverage offering. Mount Atkinson Holdings own the land identified for the MTC south of the rail corridor (and future train station).

A DRAFT UDF has been prepared and provides for up to 40,000m^2 of 'shop' floorspace without a permit. Additional 'shop' floorspace would require a permit. The UDF outlines the location of four anchor tenancies which may be supermarkets, mini majors and entertainment uses. Typically, a Discount Department Store (DDS) would anchor a centre of this size, although this is not explicitly identified in the DRAFT UDF.

In addition to retail uses, the DRAFT UDF also provides an opportunity for a range of uses identified below in Figure 4.1. Having regard for the above and a trend towards a greater diversity of uses in shopping centres would indicate a range of non-retail uses including a medical centre and allied health, childcare, co-working spaces, and entertainment etc, may also form part of the land use mix to the south of the railway line. The DRAFT UDF provides a level of flexibility that it is difficult to ascertain the exact uses that would eventually form part of the Mt Atkinson MTC, which allows for the developer to respond to market conditions at the time. Any future development at the WFCA will also need to respond to these market conditions and the competitive influences of the land to the south of the railway line.

Figure 4.1 Indicative Land Uses identified in the Draft Mt Atkinson MTC UDF

TABLE 3. INDICATIVE Town Centre LAND USE CATEGORY					
LAND USE CATEGORY	1. Retail Core Anchors	2. Retail Core	3. Large Format Retail	4. Commercial	5. Mixed Use Neighbourhood
POTENTIAL LAND USE TYPE	· Supermarkets · Mini-major stores · Cinemas, entertainment	· Shop uses and speciality retail · Cafes, food and beverage · Licensed premises, bars, music venues · Bank, pharmacies and other service retail	· Furniture, homewares, electronics and similar · Showrooms	· Offices · Financial and local service industries · Gymnasiums, dance studios, indoor sports · Hotel	· Residential · Offices · Financial and local service industries · Gymnasiums, dance studios, indoor sports · Hotel
Suggested Street Interface	*Sleeved*	*Direct*	*Landscape setback*	*Direct or landscape setback*	*Direct or Landscape setback*

TABLE 3 CONT. INDICATIVE Town Centre LAND USE CATEGORY					
LAND USE CATEGORY	6. Mixed Use Edge	7. Residential	8. Civic and Community Facilities	9. Public Space	10. Services
POTENTIAL LAND USE TYPE	· Retail or commercial ground level · Office or health above ground level/podium · Residential above ground level / podium · Creative spaces · Single use commercial/ residential within a broader precinct	· Medium density housing - (2 & 3 storey townhouse) · Higher density - apartment buildings · Retirement and aged care living · Student, affordable and key worker housing · Public, specialist and service housing	· Childcare and day care facilities · Public library, adult learning centres · Neighbourhood, youth, health and other community hubs · Recreational facilities, swim centre, basketball courts, etc · Social enterprises, community garden	· High quality streetscapes and outdoor dining opportunities · Arrival plazas, drop-off forecourt at key entries · High quality civic plaza, flexible event space as focal point	· Parking (at grade supported at interim and early stages) · Mobility hubs · Emergency services facilities · Hotel
Suggested Street Interface	*Direct*	*Landscape setback*	*Direct*	*Direct*	*Setback or landscape setback*

Source: DRAFT Mt Atkinson MTC UDF, City of Melton and Mesh

Town Centres Bisected by Railway Lines

Railway lines often present both a real and perceived barrier to customer movement. Consequently, centres bisected by railways can operate as separate centres to a certain degree. Examples exist where this has contributed to varying levels of activity on either side of the railway lines, including the following:

- Sunshine: At Sunshine, a major part of the centre is located to the north of the railway line. A smaller portion of the centre is located to the south and has a reduced level of activity relative to the north. The Sunshine Town Centre Structure Plan (2014) identifies numerous strategies and actions to revitalise the southern portion of the town centre.
- Croydon: Includes an enclosed shopping centre to the north and a main street to the south. While both precincts within the centre successfully perform their roles, they do operate in a large part as two different centres. A recent level-crossing removal has improved the level of connectivity between the two centres; however, a significant physical divide still exists between the two parts of the centre.
- Carnegie: Prior to the level-crossing removal and the development of Carnegie Central (which includes a Woolworths and an ALDI), the southern part of the centre was viewed as being the more vibrant part of the centre, with the northern part of the centre relying in a large part on its exposure to Dandenong Road. The development of Carnegie Central to the north of the railway line has contributed to a significant increase in activity in this part of the centre.

Lessons learnt from other centres dissected by railway lines include:

- While still part of the same centre, in functional terms, potential exists for areas on opposite side of the railway line to act as distinct precincts.
- Even with the infrastructure to support connectivity such as pedestrian overpasses, railway lines can represent both an actual and perceived barriers to customer movement.
- Having a strong anchor tenant that can attract customers in its own right will assist in navigating challenges associated with being on the alternative side of the railway line which possesses the retail core.

Role of Uses North of the Railway Line

As indicated earlier, potential exists for a successful and prominent LFR centre in the WFCA. It should be acknowledged that LFR centres tend to have increased levels of activity on weekends. Attracting land uses to the MTC portion of the WFCA that draw visitors throughout the weekday will assist in creating a vibrant seven-day precinct to the north of the railway line.

Furthermore, while potential exists for land uses to benefit from nearby commuter parking, this should not be considered to be the main driver of land use activity in the precinct. The challenge for the northern part of the MTC will be to create a precinct that both complements the activity happening to the south of the railway line and the LFR uses to the north, while also being of sufficient scale and interest that it could operate as a centre in its own right.

4.3 Potential Land Uses for Northern Part of MTC

Having regard for the considerations identified in Sections 4.1 and 4.2, the following land uses are considered to have the most potential to be delivered in the northern portion of Mt Atkinson MTC:

- Limited range supermarket and convenience retailing
- Medical centre and allied health

- Limited non-retail, commercial office space
- Gym and fitness centre
- Commercial accommodation
- Entertainment.

A high-level review of the opportunities for the above uses are discussed below. Many of these uses are also identified as potential uses to the south of the railway line, so will need to compete to some extent with the offer provided to the south.

4.4 Supermarket and Convenience Retailing

A supermarket would represent an anchor tenant that would attract customers to the northern part of the MTC which would support a limited range of speciality retailers. An 'anchor' supermarket tenant is identified in the concept plan provided in the PSP.

The size and operator of a supermarket to the north of the railway line will depend on what is proposed in the core part of the centre to the south.

The Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains PSP has the potential to support approximately 24,000 persons (assuming an average household size of three persons); noting it is likely the MTC would serve a trade area that extends beyond the PSP. On this basis, it would be reasonable to assume the southern part of the MTC may support at least two full-line supermarkets, most likely a Coles and a Woolworths having regard for current operators in the supermarket sector.

As noted above, it is likely the trade area would extend beyond the Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains PSP. The northern part of the MTC would also benefit from potential customers attracted to the precinct by the LFR centre. Key accessibility amenities such as commuter car parking and bus services will also be located on the north side, allowing for additional trade beyond the PSP area. Consequently, this may unlock the opportunity for a third supermarket.

The current cap of 2,500m^2 of shop floorspace is sufficient to support a mid-sized supermarket and a limited array of speciality shops. Under this scenario, an operator such as an ALDI, which typically occupies stores in the order of 1,800m^2, may be a potential occupier if not accommodated in the MTC's southern portion. ALDI are located in a number of LFR precincts throughout Victoria including Ousen Plaza in Springvale and the Clyde North Lifestyle Centre in Clyde North.

Potential may exist for a more substantial supermarket or food market offering; however, this would need to be subject to a more detailed assessment and have regard for what is proposed to the south of the railway line.

4.5 Medical Centre and Allied Health

Industry growth in the general practice health industry has been driven by continued population growth and an ageing population. An ageing population supports the industry as older people are more likely to be susceptible to illness, and therefore require access to general practice medical services. Key external drivers for the general practice industry as identified by IBISWorld (General Practice Medical Services in Australia, January 2025) include:

- Population growth of 2.2% per annum between 2019 and 2024 of persons aged 50 years or over.
- Growth in total visits to GPs of 1.8% per annum between 2020 and 2025.

- Inadequate indexation of Federal Government funding for Medicare in recent years has seen a reduction in bulk billing medical providers. As such, in accordance with the cost-of-living crisis, these factors are constraining demand with general practice care becoming more inaccessible and unaffordable.
- Total births, have slowed since the Covid-19 period with a -0.9% decline per annum between 2020 and 2025 but is forecast to increase in the near future.

Population growth in the region will support demand for GPs, medical centres and allied health services. On the basis of a population of 24,000 in the Mt Atkinson and Tarneit Plains PSP and industry benchmarks, at least one (and possibly two) medical centres containing 10-15 GPs plus a range of allied health facilities could be supported in the PSP.

Medical centres in the PSP would benefit from being located close to the sub-regional shopping centre and train station. The floorspace requirement for a medical centre would depend on its ultimate size and range of allied health facilities but could range from as small as 500m^2 to more than 2,500m^2.

4.6 Commercial Office

A location adjacent to a train station and access to a range of dining, retail and amenities associated with the future MTC are characteristics that would support commercial office development.

In addition, the WFCA is located central to a major growth area that will drive significant demand for service-related office uses, while considerable industrial uses are also planned in the region, including industrial estates being developed to the south such as in Stockland's Melbourne Business Park.

In a competitive context, Cobblebank Metropolitan Centre is planned to be the major centre serving the western growth corridor and is anticipated to accommodate significant office development in the future. Developing business parks in the region will also provide competition for office uses and can be considered by businesses seeking a more affordable regional office presence than locating within a town centre. To this extent, areas are identified for business and industrial uses located within relative proximity to the MTC, including areas to the immediate west of the WFCA.

On the basis of the above, demand for smaller scale, service-related 'shop front style' office may eventuate that could be accommodated within the northern part of the MTC. However, the competitive context for larger regional offices is likely to be strong and some risk exists associated with planning for a significant level of commercial office floorspace.

Opportunities may also exist for co-working office development, which is forming part of the changing land use mix withing suburban shopping centres. Examples exist of co-working office floorspace establishing in suburban shopping centres and include Waterman co-working developments in Chadstone, near Westfield Fountain Gate and Eastland in Ringwood.

4.7 Gym and Fitness Centre

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the gym and fitness industry had experienced significant growth, with the number of gym and fitness centres in Australia increasing by 8.2% per annum between 2019 and 2024 (IBIS World, Gym and Fitness Centres Australia, August 2025). Since the emergence of COVID-19, the Gym and Fitness industry has been impacted by lockdowns, an increase in virtual and at-home exercise, and viability concerns surrounding key operators (such as F45 and BFT). IBIS World forecast that industry revenue will increase modestly between 2025 and 2030 and observe annual growth of approximately 0.3%.

Nonetheless, WFCA has a range of attributes that position it as a suitable location for gyms and fitness centres, including:

- Proximity and accessibility to a significant residential growth area.
- Location adjacent to the Mt Atkinson MTC and train station, allowing the opportunity to capture time-poor workers, with leisure and recreation visits, particularly gym visits, being popular before or after work hours.
- Highly visible and accessible site.

Furthermore, gyms and fitness centres would complement any LFR development in the WFCA, with gyms often forming part of LFR centres.

4.8 Commercial Accommodation

Demand for serviced apartments in suburban areas typically occurs at precincts that support a high level of employment and/or offer a range of entertainment options.

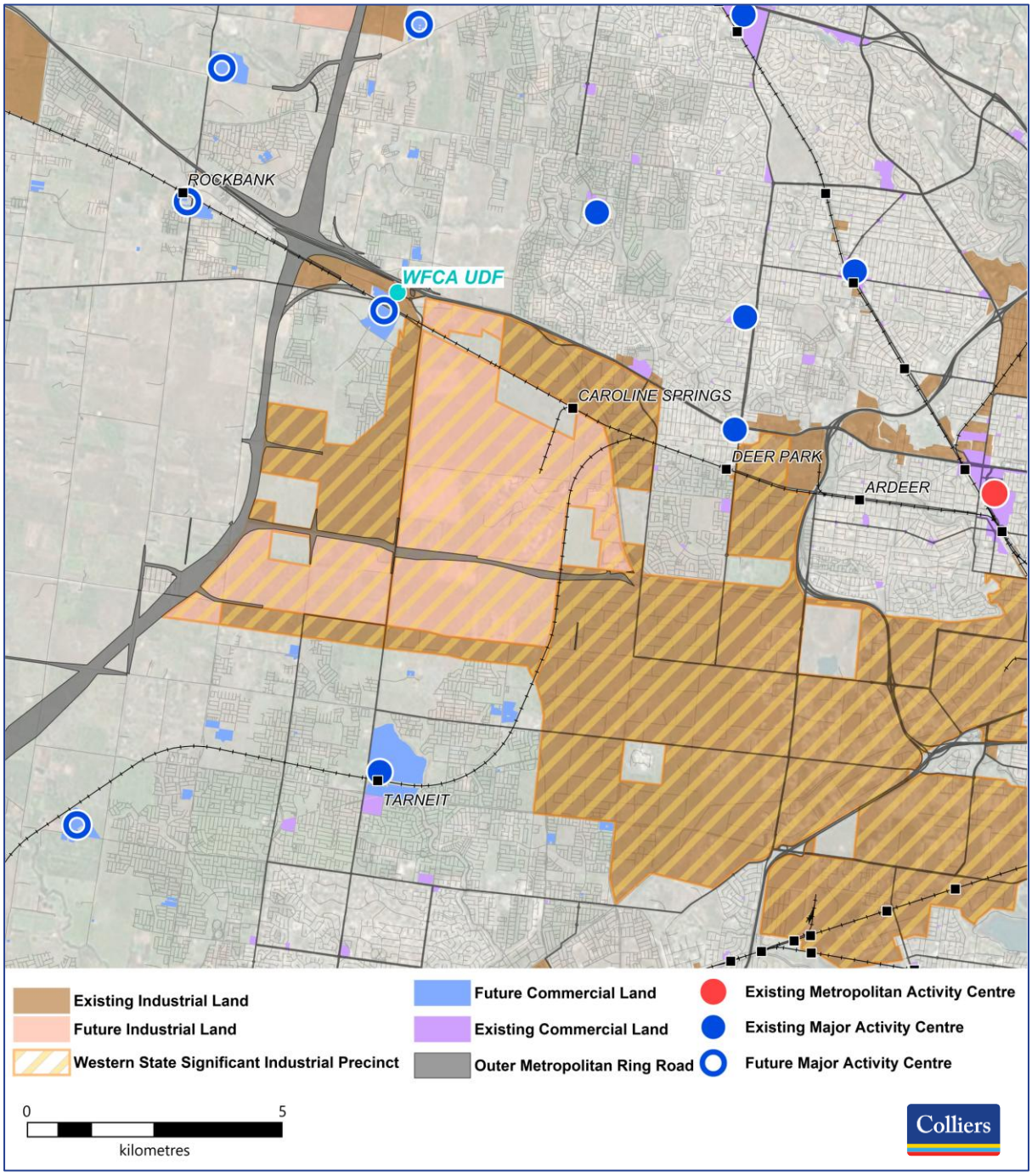
In this regard, potential may exist for a serviced apartment development at the northern part of the MTC in the longer-term. It is anticipated a range of dining and entertainment facilities will be provided in the MTC to the south of the railway line, while significant areas of employment land are developing in the surrounding region.

The Mt Atkinson MTC is the most well-located MTC (refer Figure 4.2) with respect to the future employment land in the Western State Significant Industrial Precinct. Its location adjacent to a train station is also important, providing connectivity to Melbourne's CBD and other areas (including the Melbourne Airport in the future). The future Outer Metropolitan Ring (OMR) Road is also conveniently located to the west of the MTC.

Employment areas in the surrounding region are attracting major businesses with both a national and global presence including Amazon, Hello Fresh and Scalzo Foods who have all recently established major logistics operations in the surrounding region.

Ultimately, Mt Atkinson MTC will be centrally located to one on Melbourne's largest employment precincts and opportunities associated with accommodating business travellers will be strong.

Figure 4.2 MTCs and the Western State Significant Industrial Precinct



Source: Colliers Urban Planning using MapInfo and data from Melbourne Industrial and Commercial Land Use Plan

4.9 Entertainment Uses

Entertainment within major centres can account for numerous uses that require varying floorspace requirements. Entertainment uses are becoming increasingly important in larger centres as operators seek to maximise the 'experience' of consumers and encourage night-time activities. These precincts typically include a range of entertainment uses plus food and drink premises including restaurants, cafés and bars.

The range of entertainment uses has expanded in recent years and is illustrated in the following examples of uses in currently in shopping centres:

- Traditional uses such as cinemas, ten pin bowling and arcades (eg. Timezone)
- Lazer tag
- Escape rooms
- Mini golf and bar such as Holey Moley in Eastland (Ringwood)
- Gaming centres such as Fortress in Melbourne Central which is described as 'fun gaming for everyone' and includes food and beverage offerings.

The above uses are typically provided in regional level shopping centres, often larger than that planned at Mt Atkinson, as they require significant catchment populations. For example, throughout Australia approximately one cinema screen is provided for every 10,000 persons. Assuming a relatively small cinema complex of six screens, this would require a catchment population in the order of 60,000 persons.

Having regard for the LFR trade area described in Chapter 3, potential may exist for such a use at Mt Atkinson. However, any such development in the WFCA would need to have regard for what is planned in the:

- MTC to the south of the railway line; and
- Within the broader MGC which will include the future Metropolitan Activity Centre at Cobblebank.

In addition to the above, numerous entertainment uses are also being established in industrial and business precincts. The co-location of the MTC and land intended for business uses may present an opportunity for the Mt Atkinson WFCA. Typically, these uses choose to locate in industrial areas due to the lower rentals relative to shopping centres.

Examples of these types of uses include:

- Trampoline centres
- Indoor rock climbing and ropes courses
- Indoor skate ramps
- Indoor ninja warrior courses
- Roller skating rinks.

4.10 Opportunities for 7-Eleven Site

The site located to the immediate east of Hopkins Road and south of the Western Freeway and which currently accommodates a 7-Eleven service station is planned to accommodate business uses. The comprises a net developable area of 0.93ha.

While the site has strong exposure to Western Freeway and Hopkins Road, access to the site will be somewhat limited. Therefore, future uses of the site will be those that benefit from high levels of exposure and which may include the following, all of which assume access arrangement are suitable:

- Continued operation as a service station
- Some form of restricted retailing (eg. Pet store, trades supplies, LFR, etc)
- Self-storage units.

Having regard for the other greenfield sites available for retail and commercial uses in the broader area, this site in unlikely to be considered a site in high demand. Nevertheless, assuming access arrangements

can be made, the site still has the potential to generate economic outcomes. It is suggested a high level of flexibility is provided in terms of the future use of the site so ensure economic outcomes of the site can be maximised.

4.11 Implications

To support an activated precinct to the north of the railway, it will be important to consider land uses that:

- Complement the land uses proposed in the MTC to the south of the railway line.
- Complement the potential for LFR and business uses located to the immediate north.
- Can attract customers and activity in their own right, acknowledging the potential for real or perceived barriers to customer movement between the northern and southern parts of the MTC.

Having regard for the above, the following uses are considered to represent the strongest opportunity for development in the northern portion of the MTC:

- Supermarket and convenience retailing, with the extent and operators dependant on what is planned in the MTC to the south.
- Medical centre and allied health, with potential also dependant on what is planned in the MTC to the south.
- Commercial office, with the extent likely to be limited to smaller local-service operators in shopfront tenancies; however, potential may exist for co-working space in the longer-term.
- Commercial accommodation is potentially an opportunity in the longer-term once the surrounding employment areas and MTC to the south develop.
- Entertainment uses may also represent a potential opportunity, although this is influenced by the development outcome to the south of the railway line and the existing and planned competitive context in the broader region.

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