

# Central COBURG 2020



## Central Coburg 2020 Structure Plan Volume 1



Moreland City Council

Adopted by Council on 9 August 2006

Moreland City Council acknowledges the traditional owners of the land, the Kulin Nation, of which the local Indigenous people are the Wurrundjeri. Council is committed to building a trusting, collaborative and supportive relationship with Indigenous groups, and to respecting identified Aboriginal sacred sites and special places.

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# A brief history of Coburg

When Europeans began visiting the area now known as Coburg in the 1830s, the Woiwuring people were custodians of grassland dotted with trees, and bounded by tree-lined watercourses carved through the basalt plains.

During the 1830s, in the early years of the establishment of Melbourne, colonial surveyors supervised by Robert Hoddle 'imposed European perceptions on the land by mapping it' into portions 'of 640 acres, all aligned to magnetic north.' (Broome 1987, p. 34). This mapping enabled the establishment of towns and roads, and the subsequent subdivision of these portions for sale and exploitation for farming and quarrying.

The road, which was surveyed in 1838, was at first a track but after 1850 developed as a major route to Sydney and the goldfields and was renamed Sydney Road. To provide for public uses, a portion of 327 acres was set aside as the Pentridge Village Reserve in 1840, which today is the site of the town hall, churches, cemetery and the recently decommissioned Pentridge Prison. The marks of the early surveyors remain as the major determinants of the urban morphology of the suburb we know as Coburg.

As the village of Pentridge developed, the NSW colonial government sought to establish civic institutions with crown grants of two-acre portions of the Village Reserve land fronting Sydney Road to each of the Methodist, Anglican and Catholic Churches. These three institutions each sought to consolidate their influence on the development of the colonial society with the construction of bluestone churches-cum-school houses, followed by substantial separate church buildings and associated parish residences. A state-sponsored school operated from the mid 1850s, and the oldest remaining component of the Coburg Primary School is the central block on the south side of Bell Street from 1884.

The importance of Sydney Road as a route connecting the main colonial settlements was recognised with the establishment of the ineffective Sydney Road Trust in 1842. A Bell Street Bridge over the Merri Creek was constructed in 1857, subsequently reconstructed in 1880 and later twice widened. The Pentridge District Roads Board was set up to manage these thoroughfares in 1859.

Over the next one hundred years, a series of official decisions, speculative subdivisions, and political lobbying consolidated Coburg as a municipal and service centre. The Upfield rail line, linking the village to Melbourne, was completed in 1884 and a cable tram paralleled it along Sydney Road as far as Moreland Road in 1887. A horse tram completed the journey to Gaffney Street until 1916.

Following the establishment of the timber Pentridge stockade late in 1850, the permanency of Pentridge Prison, now the prominent built landmark in Coburg, was confirmed by bluestone buildings from 1857. Land was granted for municipal purposes and the first municipal hall was constructed in 1866. Responding to concern about the association of the village with the prison, the name of the former was changed to Coburg in 1870.

The municipality was granted shire status in 1875 and city status in 1922. The Coburg weir was constructed to create a recreational lake on the Merri Creek in 1915. In the first quarter of the twentieth century, architect Charles Heath became a prominent figure in the development of Coburg with the design of the new town hall and municipal offices, which officially opened in November 1923, and City Oval's grandstand in Bridges Reserve in 1925, as well as the Fawkner Memorial Park and major buildings in Brunswick. A long-called for municipal library was finally established in 1952.

By the time of World War 2, the land within central Coburg was fully built-up with individual houses and commercial premises. Following the war, a new series of influences changed the character of Coburg significantly. The small allotments no longer served the needs of a changing retail landscape, wider car ownership and the advent of American-style retail outlets.

Coburg City Council worked with the nascent supermarket operators to consolidate the land and clear much of the housing stock to accommodate the large floor plates of the supermarkets, and their associated car parking. Most of Mary Street was closed to enable the relocation of Safeway to a

new supermarket (now BiLo), and the Community Library moved into the vacated Safeway premises on the corner of Victoria and Louisa Streets. In 1965, the extension of Russell Street north to Sydney Road was facilitated by an exchange of a portion of Bridges Reserve with the Primary School.

Coburg narrowly missed the wave of shopping centre development which affected so many other retail centres in the 1980s when a wholesale redevelopment of the area bounded by Bell Street, Sydney Road, Munro Street and the rail line as an enclosed shopping precinct with underground car parking was proposed, but not implemented.

Apart from the churches and former penal buildings on the Village Reserve, little remains of the structures built in the early years of Coburg. Even the grand post office of 1890 on Sydney Road, just south of Bell Street, has been demolished. The Wesleyan meeting room of 1849 on Bell Street remains as the oldest structure in Coburg, contemporary with the oldest remaining structures in the Melbourne metropolitan area. A number of buildings, of which the Bates Building of 1887 at 400 Sydney Road is the best example, survive as reminders of the wealth of the boom years, and Pentridge Prison has begun a new life as a home for a different sort of community.

Sources: Victorian Government 1988, *Historical Records of Victoria: Surveyors' Problems and achievements 1836-1839*, vol. 5, Victorian Government Printing Office, Melbourne; Richard Broome 2001, *Coburg: Between Two Creeks*, 2nd edn, Coburg Historical Society and Moreland City Council, Melbourne; and Laurie Burchell 1994, *Coburg: More of our history*, Coburg Historical Society and Moreland City Council, Melbourne.

### Coburg's changing character, Sydney Road



Photo 1900 Coburg Post Office



Photo 1951 Coburg Post Office



Former Post Office site today

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# Preface

## Mayor's introduction



Take a moment with me, to imagine Central Coburg in the year 2020. What changes would you imagine, expect, aspire to, for Sydney

Road, Bell Street, Coburg City Oval, public transport, and surrounding areas?

What if we could keep all the wonderful, unique aspects of our Coburg of today, all the things we value about it right now, and add to them and enhance them with new technology, innovative thinking, sustainable approaches, and careful planning, to breathe new life into Central Coburg and make it an even better place to live, work and enjoy for all members of our community?

What if Central Coburg could develop into a major shopping, living, employment and activity precinct in Moreland? What if, together with State and Federal Government, local developers, community groups and service providers, we could transform it into a system of integrated pedestrian-friendly streets and

spaces, linked by networks of green space, tree-lined avenues, leafy parks and shady places to meet, providing easy access for all members of our community, on foot, by bike, or by public transport?

Can you imagine a Central Coburg which has become a sought-after living environment – offering diverse housing choices, a fresh and vibrant shopping precinct, and a range of services all available in one central location? A new Central Coburg with a strong economic base that provides confidence for retailers and employment opportunities for its community?

This vision for Central Coburg, developed with community input and adopted by Council in 2003, has inspired Council's long-term view of development in the Central Coburg area. Drawing on this vision, Council developed a draft structure plan which offered strategies and processes for achieving this Central Coburg of the future.

Having received knowledge, support and feedback on the ideas outlined in the draft plan, on Wednesday 9 August 2006 Moreland City Council approved the *Central Coburg 2020 Structure Plan*, which will guide the regeneration of Central Coburg over

the next 15 years. The adoption of the plan was the culmination of five years' consultation with the Coburg community, traders, landowners, State Government agencies and other stakeholders.

Having consulted extensively with the community and agreeing on a plan, it is very exciting to be able to present the adopted plan to you. This structure plan is a visionary document. It reflects our hopes and desires for our city and its community. It contains all the values our community holds dear – environmentally sustainable development, accessibility for all, well-connected streets and well-managed traffic, high-quality amenity in living, shopping, services and recreation. This plan provides an integrated approach to developing Central Coburg.

Your Council is committed to this plan and its delivery over the coming years. With a committed and united effort, with careful planning and forethought that takes on board the needs of all members of our community, Coburg really can be a wonderful city of the future, a sustainable city and a city of which we can all be proud.

But we can't achieve this without you. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who provided input in a variety of ways throughout the preparation of the plan. I ask now that you maintain that interest and get involved in the design and delivery of the projects that arise out of the plan.

**Cr Anthony Helou JP  
Mayor**

## Executive summary

The *Central Coburg 2020 Structure Plan* outlines an exciting vision of the future for all residents of Moreland. The document provides a long-term framework for the regeneration of the Coburg Activity Centre over the next fifteen years.

The activity centre extends along the tram corridor from Moreland Road to Gaffney Street and includes the Coburg Shopping Centre and the redevelopment of the former Pentridge Prison. New development will provide the opportunity to create a vibrant mixed use centre with more services, facilities and activity in a high quality environment.

Key features of the plan include:

- provision for 3,000 new dwellings
- provision for 65,000 m<sup>2</sup> additional commercial/retail floor space
- 1,400 new jobs for Moreland residents with over 10,000 jobs over the construction phase
- over \$900,000,000 of investment in construction over the life of the project
- more residents in the core adding to the vitality of the public realm
- integration of community facilities and improved access to public transport
- development controlled along Sydney Road shopping strip to preserve and build upon its

unique character

- improved certainty for new development for both developer and residents
- improved and additional public places allowing for meeting places for all
- improved access to green open space.

The majority of additional dwellings proposed for the activity centre will be focused in new development behind the Coburg Shopping Centre and at Pentridge. New housing opportunities will be provided in the centre and requirements are outlined for more accessible housing and the inclusion of more affordable housing.

Expanded retailing will bring new jobs for Moreland's residents, additional dollars to the Coburg economy and enable a greater retail offer. This will be supported by additional night time activities bringing more life and improved safety to the centre.

Enhanced movement systems around the centre will ensure improved pedestrian and cycling access, reduced transport congestion and better amenity. Pedestrian amenity is to be improved with a range of green links through the centre and to surrounding parkland. A series of public open spaces are proposed that will provide places for the community to meet, interact or just be.

A sustainable urban form is outlined for the activity centre through the movement network. Any new development will be required to meet strict environmentally sustainable development (ESD) requirements to reduce impact on the earth's resources.

A key focus of the structure plan is on creating an environment that is physically suitable and socially welcoming to all people. Standards have been set to ensure maximum access to all people of the community, to housing, streets, public buildings, public spaces and transport services.

To support the Coburg and Moreland communities, community facilities and services will be concentrated and encouraged to the activity centre. A range of community hubs are proposed that will ensure that the needs of the Coburg, and wider Moreland, population now and in the future are met.

Key projects proposed as part of the structure plan include the development of a public transport interchange to improve access to the centre and move towards a more sustainable future. An information and learning hub is also proposed, incorporating a new library suitable to the changing needs of the twenty-first century with meeting rooms, community spaces and other compatible services.

The *Central Coburg 2020 Structure Plan* is a long-term plan. Its delivery will require the input of a range of partners including residents, traders, community groups, the State Government and private industry. Council will play a key role in facilitating this plan for the Moreland community.

## What is a structure plan?

A structure plan provides local councils and their communities with a long-term plan for integrated, systematic and consistent considerations and requirements to guide any proposal for change in a given centre.

Structure planning is the process of creating a framework for the integrated development of an activity centre. Structure plans guide the major changes to land use, built form and public spaces. The process of developing a structure plan should

produce both a framework, articulating how the centre will develop, and the actions needed to realise that framework. A structure plan will usually require a planning scheme amendment as one of its implementation mechanisms.

Structure planning for activity centres aims to give effect to the policies and objectives set out for activity centres in the Victorian State Government's policy *Melbourne 2030: Planning for Sustainable Growth* and to provide effectively for changing community needs.

## What is an activity centre?

Activity centres are places where people can shop, work, meet, relax and live. Well-served by public transport, they provide a focus for services, employment and social interaction. They range in size and intensity of use and include strip shopping centres, major education and employment centres and centres focused on regional malls.

Coburg has been identified as a 'principal activity centre' in the hierarchy of Melbourne's activity centres. Principal activity centres are identified as having characteristics including a mix of activities, well-served by public transport, a very large catchment and potential to grow and support intensive housing developments.

There are many ways to define the extent of an activity centre. In defining the Coburg Activity Centre, a study area was first examined. The study area generally examined an area with a radius of 1 kilometre from the intersection of Bell Street and Sydney Road, and along the transport corridor of Sydney Road. In defining the boundaries of the Coburg Activity Centre, the following were considered:

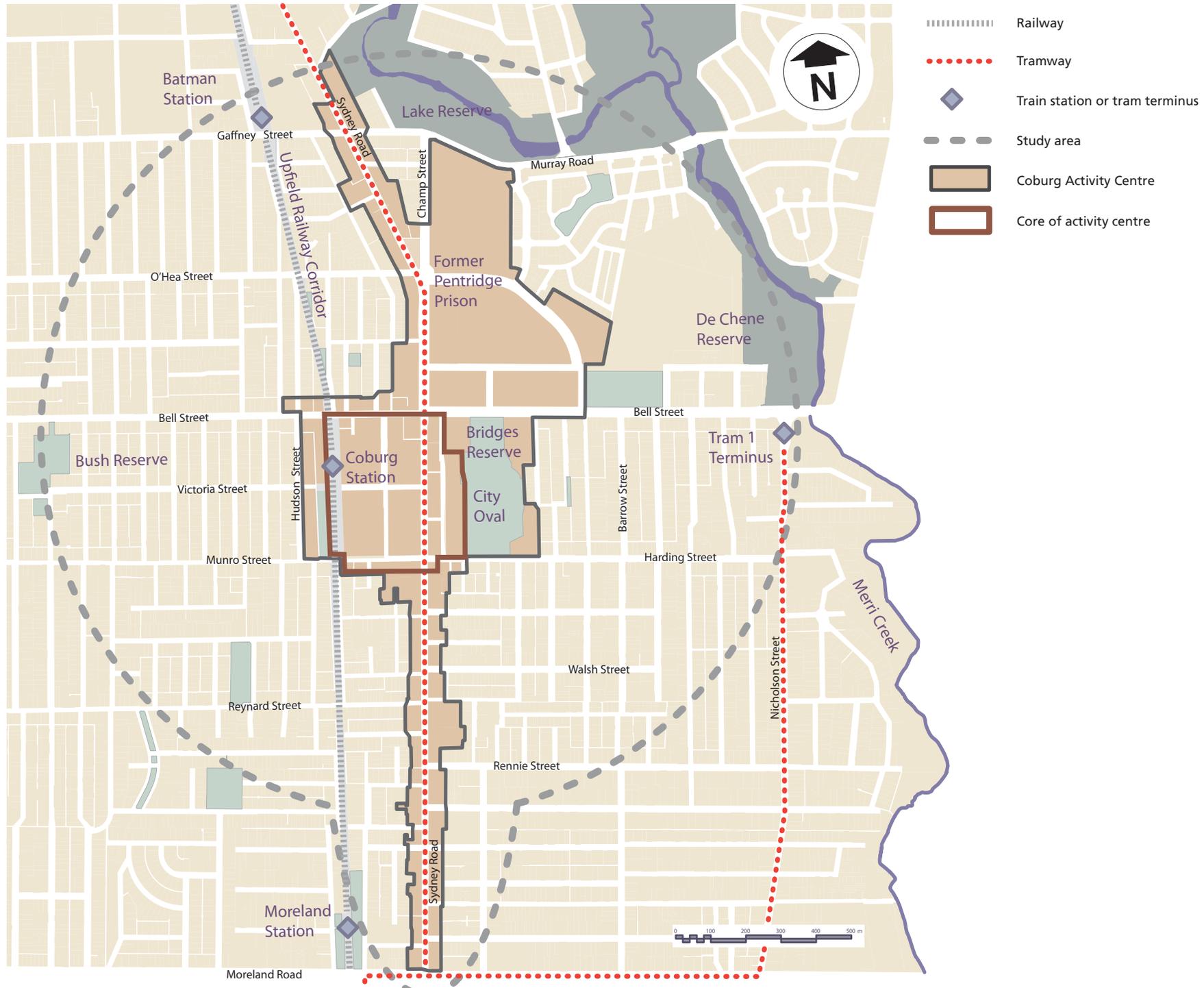
- land use
- preferred future direction of development
- growth and change opportunities

- accessibility
- areas to be protected from undesirable change.

Following an extensive analysis of this area, the boundaries of the Coburg Activity Centre have been defined. Map P.1 outlines the extent of the Coburg Activity Centre.



# Map P.1 Boundaries of the Coburg Activity Centre



## Why create a Central Coburg 2020 Structure Plan?

The *Central Coburg 2020 Structure Plan* is a long-term plan to guide decisions in the Coburg Activity Centre. It is a holistic document developed within a triple-bottom line framework where decisions have been made following consideration of their social, cultural, environmental and economic consequences.

The structure plan will guide decisions made by Council in relation to activities in both the private and public realm. It will be used to guide decision making in relation to planning development applications for use and development in the centre and amendments to the *Moreland Planning Scheme*. It will provide the basis for the development of a Development Contributions Plan and a Parking Precinct Plan which will provide more detailed requirements for development.

The structure plan provides an important document for Council in relation to the delivery of services and the allocation of capital works within the Coburg Activity Centre. Services such as library and leisure facilities provision and accommodation will be influenced by the plan. Capital works allocation, such as streetscape improvements and drainage, will be determined by the priorities set out in the plan. Transport makes a very important

contribution to the achievement of the outcomes of the plan and will be further developed in a separate document to be titled *Central Coburg Integrated Transport Strategy*. This structure plan however, sets out the guiding principles for the development of that strategy.

The *Central Coburg 2020 Structure Plan* will provide the basis for funding applications to external bodies, including the State Government, for projects identified in the plan, such as community services and capital works projects.

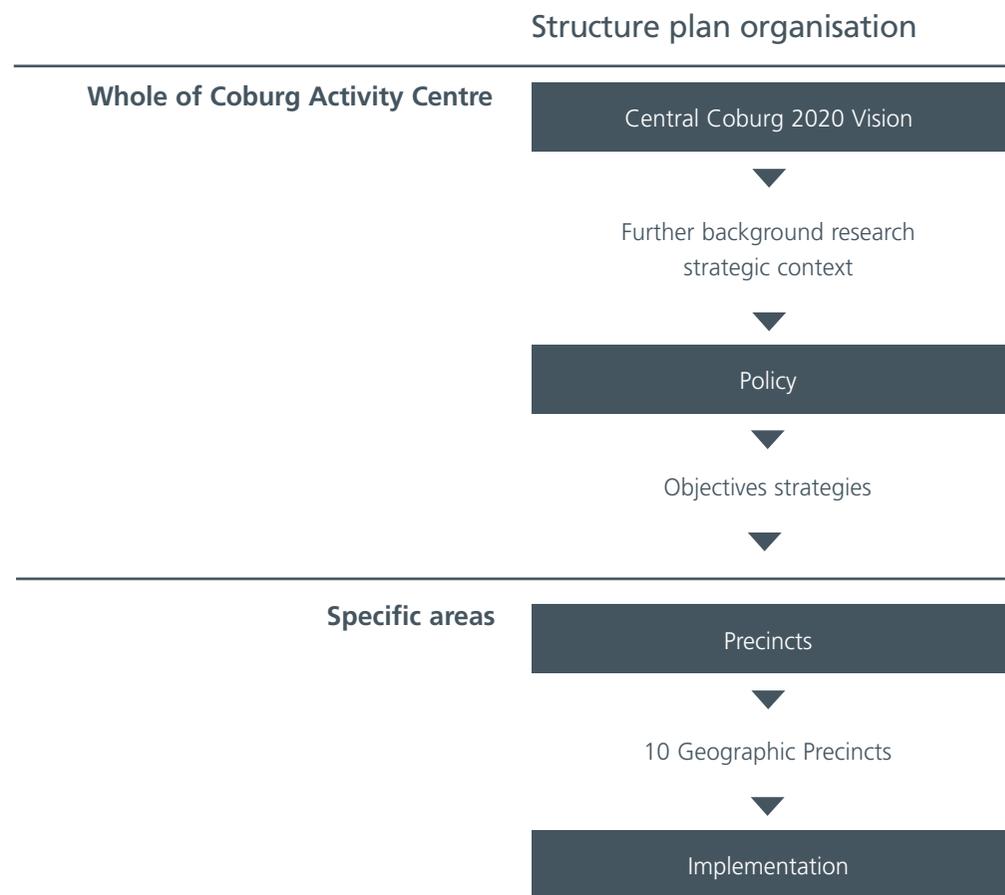
## How is this plan organised?

The *Central Coburg 2020 Structure Plan* is organised in nine parts. To ensure that triple-bottom line factors are considered in all decisions affecting the Coburg Activity Centre, any proposal for use or development in the centre by the community or Council will be assessed against the policies, objectives and guidelines specified in each part of the document.

The document is currently structured in two volumes to ease readability of the plan and direct interest. Please note, however, the plan must be read in its entirety to understand the influences on decisions made in Volume 2.

Volume 1 provides an overview of the project, detailing the background information and the policy

Figure P.1 Organisation of structure plan



context within which the plan has been developed.

Volume 2 sets out the future for the Coburg Activity Centre by outlining a series of policies, objectives strategies and guidelines for new development. The proposed method for implementation of the plan is also outlined. The implementation strategies and an implementation plan will comprise a third volume.

Figure P.1 demonstrates the relationship between components of the Structure Plan.

## Volume 1

### ***Part 1. Central Coburg Vision***

– outlines the vision developed for the Coburg Activity Centre under the Central Coburg 2020 project, developed in conjunction with the community in 2003. It provides an overview of how the development of the structure plan will advance the vision and the opportunities the structure plan will provide for Coburg.

### ***Part 2. Policy context and background work***

– provides a summary of the strategic context and background work undertaken to develop the *Central Coburg 2020 Structure Plan* building on the *Central Coburg 2020 Vision*. These have influenced the development of the plan.

### ***Part 3. A sustainable Coburg***

– outlines Council's commitment to sustainability through the consideration of social, cultural, economic and environmental factors, known as the triple-bottom line. A sustainable Coburg is a key driver of the structure plan.

### ***Part 4. Background and issues***

– outlines a summary of the background information and issues arising from the information that the structure plan needs to address.

## Volume 2

### ***Part 5. Structure Plan policies***

– sets out the policies for redevelopment in the activity centre. The objectives establish the desired future of the activity centre, while the strategies articulate how this will be achieved. A number of key projects already identified, arising out of the development of the plan, are outlined.

### ***Part 6. Environmentally sustainable development***

– details the environmental guidelines for all new development within the activity centre. These aim to achieve best practice urban and environmental design.

### ***Part 7. Precinct guidelines***

– sets out the guidelines for 10 precincts identified within the activity centre. Detailed guidelines for built

form and land use for new development are outlined, along with improvements to the public realm to support the revitalisation of the centre. Precinct-specific guidelines highlight the particular qualities and opportunities afforded by different areas. The contribution of each precinct to the activity centre is clearly articulated.

### ***Part 8. Planning scheme requirements***

– sets out the requirements for the assessment of planning applications.

### ***Part 9. Implementation***

– sets out the range of mechanisms available to deliver the structure plan. The stakeholders who could contribute to the delivery of the structure plan are identified. Projects identified as critical to changing the perception of the centre and encouraging suitable redevelopment are outlined. A range of governance arrangements for the delivery of the structure plan within Council is outlined.

## Volume 3

This volume will provide a detailed program of actions and projects arising from the structure plan, and outline priority level and partners. The governance arrangements will be determined.

## How has the structure plan been developed?

The development of the *Central Coburg 2020 Structure Plan* has been a staged process commencing with the development of the *Central Coburg 2020 Vision*. The Central Coburg vision is articulated in the document titled *Central Coburg 2020 – Background Report and Vision*. This document summarises the research, consultation and the final vision.

The structure plan has been shaped by a rigorous approach to research, community consultation and feedback, debate and discussions to ensure the best outcomes for the Coburg and Moreland communities.

Community consultation has been a fundamental element in the development of the *Central Coburg 2020 Vision* and this approach will flow through to the structure plan.

The consultation program has been designed to ensure that the community and key stakeholders play a meaningful role in the development and implementation of the vision.

The community and stakeholder comments received to date were used to inform the research and findings of the next stage. A range of techniques were used to engage the community in the project: community newsletters with feedback sheets, information booths, community

discussions and workshops, website and information displays.

Figure P.2 provides a summary of the process used to develop the *Central Coburg 2020 Structure Plan* from inception to the vision and then to the structure plan. It outlines the extensive background research, analysis and consultation undertaken in the development of the plan.

Figure P.2 Project methodology during development of plan

