



DIGGERS REST PRECINCT STRUCTURE PLAN BACKGROUND REPORT

MARCH 2012

Diggers Rest Precinct Structure Plan

Background Report

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1 LOCAL CONTEXT AND SITE DESCRIPTION

1.1 Metropolitan and Regional Context

The *Diggers Rest Precinct Structure Plan (PSP)* area is located approximately 30 kilometres north of the Melbourne CBD, within the south west periphery of the Sunbury Growth Corridor.

The draft *Sunbury Growth Corridor Plan* covers an area located predominantly to the east and north of the existing Sunbury Township. A small section of the growth area is located to the west of the existing Diggers Rest Township. The corridor is bounded by Jackson Creek and steep escarpments to the north and limitations presented by runway approaches to Melbourne Airport to the south.

The Sunbury Growth Corridor is expected to accommodate an additional 21,000 new dwellings in both Sunbury and Diggers Rest over the next 30 years to accommodate growth in population of at least 60,000 people. Employment projections indicate around 10,000-15,000 new jobs will be generated in the growth area over this period to accompany the increased population.

Major investment in new transport infrastructure in the form of the electrification of the existing Sunbury railway line and improvement to the Diggers Rest station in addition to the Outer Metropolitan Ring Road (OMR) will underpin the Corridor's urban growth and accessibility. Together the railway line and OMR will deliver important metropolitan accessibility benefits and open up strategic links to employment opportunities that will connect the Sunbury Growth Corridor to Metropolitan Melbourne.

The draft *Sunbury Growth Corridor Plan*, which covers the City of Hume and Melton Shire, introduces a new strategic plan to guide the growth of the corridor. The Plan:

- Identifies several growth fronts some to the north east and south west.
- Supports limited biodiversity assets including some remnant individual Red Gum trees and only small degraded patches of remnant grasslands.
- Supports residential and employment growth and provides for the strategic integration of new urban areas within the existing Sunbury and Diggers Rest.
- Facilitates the long term connection of new urban areas with expanding growth fronts in the main Sunbury growth area within the City of Hume
- Recognises the need to facilitate access to existing and planned transport infrastructure including the existing Calder Freeway, proposed Outer Metropolitan Ring Road and the existing Sunbury rail line
- Plans for employment activity within the Sunbury growth area
- Provides for the protection and enhancement of major creek corridors and adjacent habitat environments as regionally significant environmental and biodiversity assets for the corridor

- Creates new public transport and arterial road connections that will join the corridor with the existing and planned growth areas around Sunbury.
- Creates opportunity for transit orientated development around the existing and proposed rail stations on the Sunbury Rail Line.

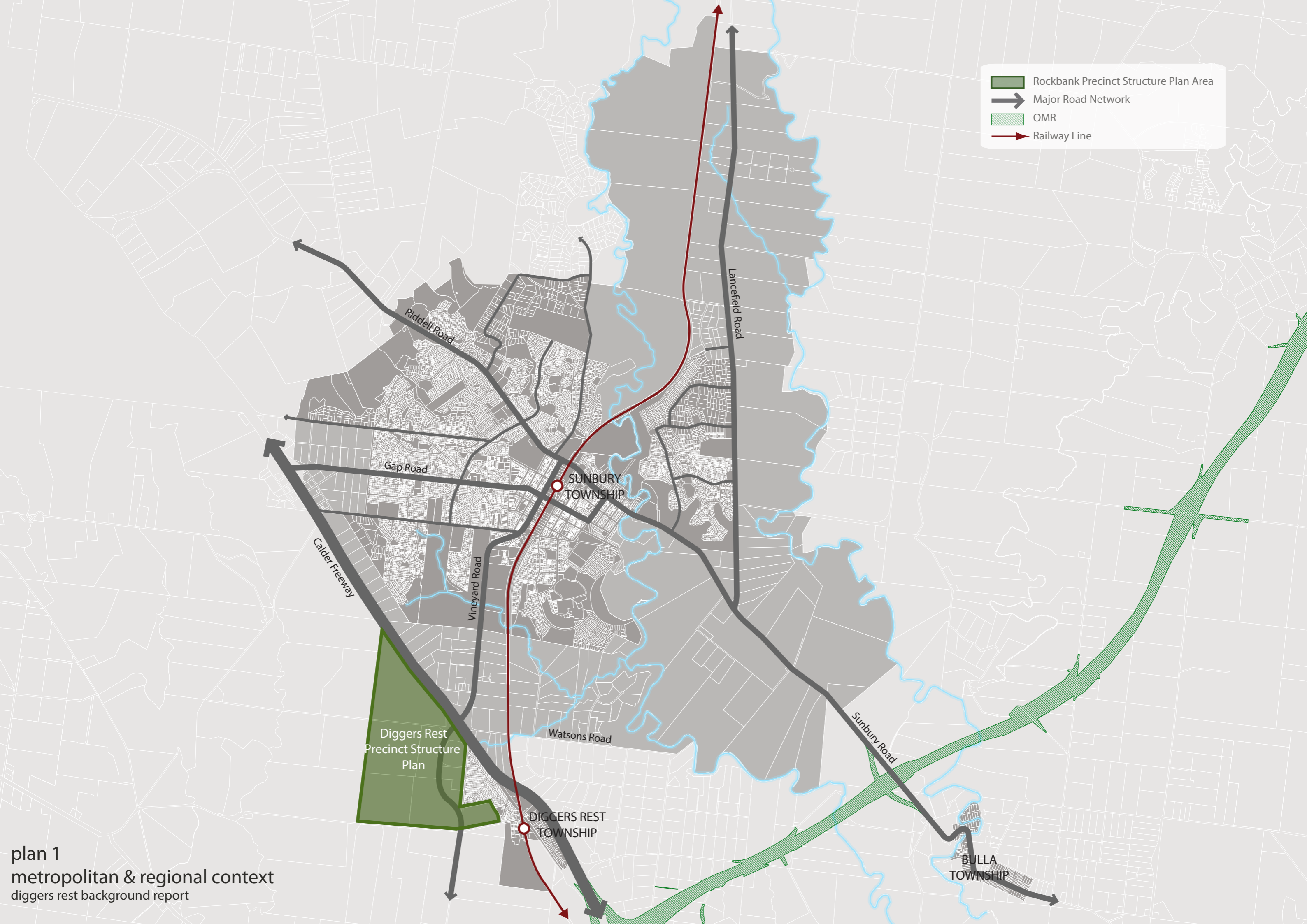
1.1.1 Diggers Rest Precinct

The Diggers Rest Precinct forms a part of the Sunbury Growth Corridor however the township is separated from the main Sunbury growth area and by the Calder Freeway and functions as a distinct neighbourhood.

Diggers Rest also falls within a separate municipality (Melton Shire Council) to the remainder of the corridor (Hume City Council). The Diggers Rest PSP will allow the Township to grow and become a community that will be supported by a Local Town Centre, community facilities and sports grounds. The growth area as it relates to Diggers Rest extends to the township, north of Diggers Rest-Coimadai Road to encompass an area to allow the township to grow to a population of approximately 1%-\$ people, a size capable of supporting higher order community services and infrastructure.

Diggers Rest will function as a sustainable component or neighbourhood of the larger Sunbury growth corridor, whilst maintaining its unique local character and aesthetic.

- Rockbank Precinct Structure Plan Area
- Major Road Network
- OMR
- Railway Line



1.2 Local Context

1.2.1 History

The Diggers Rest study area is located within the language group of the Woi wurrung (spelling according to Clark 1990, 364), the group that occupied the basins of the Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers. The Woi wurrung clan most closely associated with the Diggers Rest region were the Marin balug, who principally identified with the Kororoit Creek and the area around Sunbury (Clark 1990, 384).

Today the Wurundjeri Tribe Land Compensation and Cultural Heritage Council Incorporated is the registered Aboriginal party (RAP) under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic), with responsibilities in relation to the management and administration of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage matters in the Activity Area.

European settlement saw the Diggers Rest area originally established as a hotel and "resting place" for gold prospectors heading to the Mount Alexander (Castlemaine) goldfields in the 1850s. In the 1870s, a railway line was extended to Sunbury which resulted in the establishment of a station at Diggers Rest. Despite these two assets, very little development occurred within the township prior to the 1970s.

The existing residential township of Diggers Rest was laid out and developed in the 1970's and early 1980's. Diggers Rest is currently a small residential community with a population of approximately 1,800. The township has very limited retail and employment opportunities and underutilised community services and infrastructure. Diggers Rest currently function as a small dormitory township to Melbourne's western suburbs and the existing Sunbury Township. The isolated nature of the small urban residential community and the lack of capacity to support services was the stimulus for the Melton Shire Council to pursue actively the growth of Diggers Rest to a township capable of providing improved services and function as an effective residential community.

1.2.2 Surrounding Neighbourhoods

The following neighbourhoods exist in the surrounding context of the Diggers Rest PSP area:

Sydenham/Taylor's Lakes / Watergardens Town Centre

Sydenham/Taylor's Lakes is a residential community located in the City of Brimbank which has developed over the past 25 years and includes an established and expanding town centre known as Watergardens.

Watergardens has become the focal point of the growing Sydenham Taylor's Lakes communities and is close to Diggers Rest and accessible via the existing Melbourne - to Bendigo rail line (Watergardens is one station from Diggers Rest).

Watergardens is a significant principal town centre in close proximity to the Diggers Rest community and will continue to provide higher order retailing, community facilities and services and employment for Diggers Rest.

Taylor's Lakes/Sydenham is located approximately 8 kilometres from the southern boundary of the Diggers Rest Township.

Sunbury Township

Sunbury is a major town centre, and includes community facilities and services which cater to a broader regional catchment. Sunbury is in close proximity to Diggers Rest and accessible via the existing Melbourne - to Bendigo rail line (Sunbury is one station from Diggers Rest). Currently Diggers Rest residents have a strong relationship with the Sunbury Township given the lack of a local town centre within the Diggers Rest Township.

Diggers Rest is approximately 5 kilometres from the main Sunbury town centre.

1.2.3 Transport and movement

The existing Melbourne - to Bendigo rail line provides a major transport opportunity for Diggers Rest to function as an integrated part of metropolitan Melbourne. The improvements to the rail line including electrification and an upgraded station at Diggers Rest presents an opportunity to link Diggers Rest on a regular basis via the public transport network to employment areas between the township and the Melbourne CBD.

The Calder Freeway provides one of Melbourne's major freeway transport links to the CBD and the broader metropolitan freeway network. The future planned Outer Metropolitan Ring Road (OMR) will enhance the capacity of the freeway network to carry larger volumes of traffic and to distribute traffic movement more equitably to other areas of Melbourne.

Local access to the freeway network is provided by Vineyard Road which forms the current western boundary of the township. This road also provides a direct link and potential bus route to the Sunbury town centre.

1.2.4 Employment and Activity Centres

Current employment opportunities within the Sunbury growth corridor are limited. Melbourne Airport and the Hume employment corridor provide the main job opportunities for local employment within the north-west employment area which the growth area forms part of.

The draft *Sunbury Growth Corridor Plan* makes provision for 210 hectares of industrial land which will provide for service based industries and manufacturing but also potentially logistic and associated uses.

The Major Town Centre which services Diggers Rest is located within Sunbury at the Sunbury town centre.

Opportunities exist to provide a local town centre within Diggers Rest as the planned population catchment is of a critical size to support a supermarket based local town centre.

Diggers Rest is currently incapable of supporting a basic level of retail and service activity at its current population. The existing local shops satisfy only some of the daily needs of local residents.

With a new population of 12,000, there will be a need for a new Local Town Centre (LTC) with a total of 6,000sqm of floorspace and capable of generating approximately 200 new jobs in the local community. The optimal location for the LTC is on the western side of Vineyard Road in the proximity of Houdini Drive.

In addition to the LTC, more localised retail opportunities may exist within the station precinct and existing township.

Employment opportunities are provided in the proposed Diggers Rest business precinct which will cater to local small scale manufacturing and service industry uses.

1.2.5 Community Facilities

Diggers Rest currently has a number of existing facilities within the township which are underutilised and inefficient due to a lack of critical population mass.

The growth corridor plan provides an opportunity for the Diggers Rest Township to expand to a size that will improve service levels for current facilities, augment existing infrastructure and provide additional facilities currently lacking in the township.

Key existing facilities include:

- Existing Diggers Rest Primary School, located on Plumpton Road.
- A small community centre adjoining the Diggers Rest Primary School.
- Active open space including sports grounds and hard court surfaces.

Proposed community infrastructure for the Diggers Rest PSP consists of a mixture of new and upgraded facilities, including:

- New multi-purpose community centre.
- New dual-oval active open space and pavilion.
- New tennis courts at Diggers Rest Tennis Club.
- Extensive upgrades to existing pavilion at Diggers Rest Community Hub.
- Upgrades to facilities at Diggers Rest Bowling Club, Diggers Rest Tennis Club and the local skate park.
- Provision of public infrastructure within the open space network throughout Diggers Rest.

to Gisbourne

Calder Freeway

- Precinct Area
- Existing Urban
- Freeway
- Arterial Road
- Railway Line
- Rail Station
- Town Centre
- Existing/Future Employment
- Existing/Future Regional Open Space
- Open Space
- Quarry
- Rivers & Creeks
- Waterway Corridor

Emu Creek

SUNBURY
Sunbury Station

Jacksons Creek

Big Hill

Holden Flora & Fauna Reserve

Diggers Rest Township

Diggers Rest Station

Diggers Rest - Coimadai Road

Bulla - Diggers Rest Road

Outer Metropolitan Ring Road

Bulla

Korooroit Creek

Plumpton Road

to Melbourne CBD

2 Diggers Rest Precinct Features

2.1 Heritage

The traditional indigenous owners of the precinct are the Wurundjeri tribe. A standard and desktop cultural heritage assessment has been undertaken for the area.

A number of scatter sites and individual artefacts have been identified. Concentrations of artefacts exist in the central portion of the main drainage line and in the lots immediate west of Vineyard Road. Sites close to the freeway interchange west of Vineyard Road appear to have been disturbed and dispersed, possibly by agricultural activities. A standard *Cultural Heritage Management Plan* will be required a part of the development of the land.

Four sites of historical heritage significance have been identified within the PSP area. The property at 2-188 Davis Road contains an intact farm house, constructed in approximately 1914 and representative of timer Federation style architecture. The house, picket fence, surrounding trees and outbuildings are covered by Heritage Overlay HO47 in the Melton Planning Scheme.

Elsewhere in the PSP area, there are remains of two farmhouses and remnants of farm activity. All appear to be constructed in the early twentieth century and consist of ruins or remnant features of buildings demolished several decades ago. All three of these sites are listed on the Victorian Heritage Register.

2.2 Biodiversity

The Diggers Rest Precinct is highly modified, and the majority of the precinct has been cleared for agriculture and is dominated by exotic vegetation.

2.2.1 Flora

Remnant vegetation within the precinct comprises two Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs), including Plains Grassland and Sedge Wetland. There are approximately 10.21 habitat hectares of remnant vegetation present within the precinct: 10.19 habitat hectares of Plains Grassland, and 0.02 habitat hectares of Sedge Wetland.

There are no trees within remnant patches, or scattered trees within the Precinct.

2.2.2 Fauna

The habitat quality for significant fauna is low due to the highly modified nature of the Precinct. No fauna species of national or state significance were recorded during assessments. There is a low likelihood that resident Growling Grass Frog, Golden Sun Moth, Striped Legless Lizard, Plains Wanderer and/or Brown Toadlet may occur within the Precinct.

2.3 Topography and Landform

The north west of Melbourne is characterised by extensive basalt plains and dominant volcanic hills. The natural landscape consists of grassy plains with occasional trees located along drainage lines. Post settlement, dryland agriculture predominated with extensive grain cropping occurring.

The PSP area forms a component of the plains area and is characterised by relatively flat, treeless plains used for dryland cropping. A small shallow drainage line is located in the west of the PSP area but this provides little topographical relief. The only other landscape features of significance are degraded agricultural windrows in relatively poor health.

The visual and landscape assessment for Diggers Rest recommends the following planning and design principles:

- Develop simple landscape treatments, preferably based around established indigenous or cultural landscape themes, and simple, large scale design forms that are compatible with the scale and character of the surrounding rural setting.
- Maintain visual links to surrounding landscape features such as volcanic cones and elevated ridgelines.
- Visually and physically reconnect the site where possible to regional landscape systems (i.e. water courses, reserve systems).

2.4 Catchment and Drainage

Central to the planned area is the drainage line that essentially drains high land to the north east and flows in a south westerly direction to become a more formalised stream close to Coimadai Road. This constitutes the main drainage catchment and focus for planned stormwater management.

This central drainage line brings opportunities for stormwater treatment and retardation associated with the urban development.

2.5 Geotechnical Assessment

The geology of the site is characterised by basalt plains with relatively shallow soils overlaying basalt. The location is generally flat with a gentle fall from north east to south west. A review of environmental audits and a site walkover concluded that the area has a long historical use for agriculture, particularly dryland cropping and grazing.

An environmental contamination assessment of the land revealed that the site has:

- Low potential for widespread gross site contamination;
- Medium potential for localised soil contamination;
- Low potential for groundwater contamination;
- Presence of general waste materials which are recommended for removal.

Apart from some low level potential for soil contamination associated with farm sheds and outbuildings, overall contamination risk is low and generally limited to existing and former work shed and home sites. Additional targeted testing may be required as part of the future development of the area.

2.6 Melbourne Airport Environs Overlay

Partially impacting upon to the south of the precinct is the by the Melbourne Airport Environs Overlay. Designed to protect runway approaches to Melbourne Airport, the overlay limits or restricts residential development south of the precinct.

2.7 Servicing

Sewer reticulation: A pumping station serves Diggers Rest Township and discharges approximately 3.5 kilometres to the north at Sunbury Sewerage Treatment Plant. An additional sewerage pumping station will be required to service the majority of the PSP area, anticipated to be located at the western extent of Diggers Rest -Coimadai Road. Some augmentation of the existing sewerage system will be also required to service the PSP area, the extent of which will depend on the sequencing of development.

Water supply: Potable water is currently supplied to the existing Diggers Rest Township via water mains along Vineyard Road and Plumpton Road. A new connection to Melbourne Water's water supply system will be required to service the PSP area along Calder Freeway or Plumpton Road. A water supply pump station occupying approximately 1 hectare of land will also be required within the PSP area.

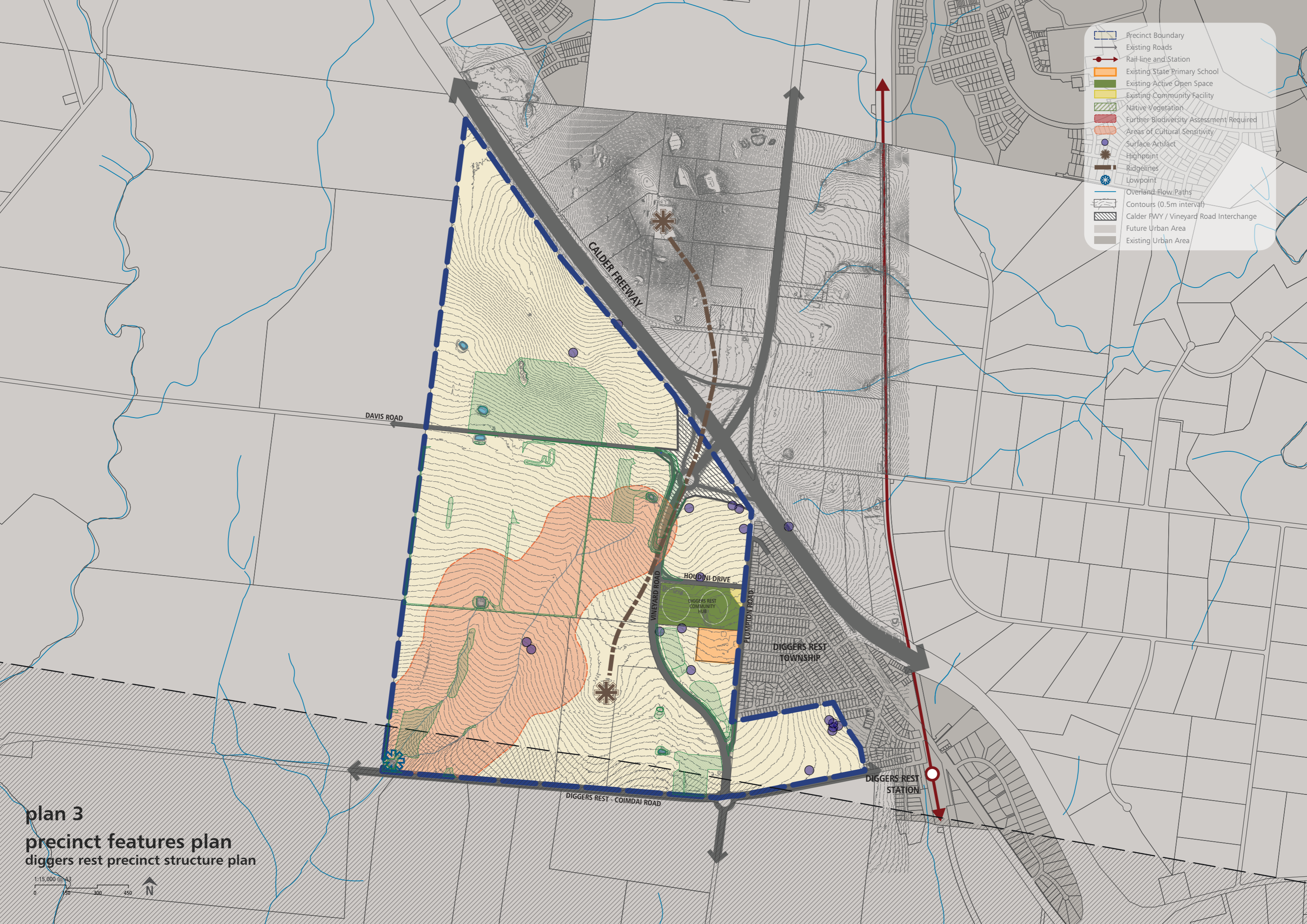
Recycled water: Class B recycled water from the Sunbury Treatment Plant is available along Vineyard Road. Melbourne Water intends to construct a Class A treatment facility at the Sunbury Sewerage Treatment plant in the coming years and this water could become available to the PSP area via a duplication of the existing Vineyard Road pipeline.

Electricity supply: There is sufficient capacity in the existing electricity assets to supply the PSP area from the zone substation at Calder Park. Overhead power lines in Davis Road, Plumpton Road and Diggers Rest-Coimadai Road will be required to be augmented to serve the precinct.

Gas Supply: The existing gas reticulation system supplying Diggers Rest will require augmentation to service the PSP area. This will include duplication or upsizing of the existing transmission line, extension of the existing transmission line, and the construction of a new pressure reduction station.

Telecommunications - Development within the PSP area will require the installation of pit and pipe infrastructure through the subdivision works to install fibre optic cable. Connection to the external NBN Co network (or via an alternative provider) will also be required.

- Precinct Boundary
- Existing Roads
- Rail-line and Station
- Existing State Primary School
- Existing Active Open Space
- Existing Community Facility
- Native Vegetation
- Further Biodiversity Assessment Required
- Areas of Cultural Sensitivity
- Surface Artifact
- Highpoint
- Ridgelines
- Lowpoint
- Overland Flow Paths
- Contours (0.5m interval)
- Calder FWY / Vineyard Road Interchange
- Future Urban Area
- Existing Urban Area



plan 3
precinct features plan
diggers rest precinct structure plan



3 Background Studies

The Precinct Structure Plan for Diggers Rest has been informed by a number of background studies as follows:

1. *Arboricultural Assessment and Report: Diggers Rest Precinct* (Tree Logic Pty Ltd) June 2011
2. *Assessment of Community Infrastructure Requirements and Opportunities: Diggers Rest Precinct Structure Plan* (ASR Research Pty Ltd) November 2011
3. *Diggers Rest Precinct Structure Plan - Aboriginal Heritage - Desktop and Standard Assessment and Historical Heritage Assessment (Parcels 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7)* (Andrew Long and Associates Pty Ltd) November 2011
4. *Diggers Rest Precinct Structure Plan - Aboriginal Heritage - Desktop and Standard Assessment and Historical Heritage Assessment (Parcels 1 and 2)* (Andrew Long and Associates Pty Ltd) November 2011
5. *Diggers Rest Precinct Structure Plan - Broad Hectare Assessment* (O'Briens Valuers and Property Consultants) November 2011
6. *Diggers Rest Precinct Structure Plan - Development Contributions Plan Infrastructure Costing* (Meinhardt) December 2011
7. *Diggers Rest Expansion - Services Infrastructure Report* (Cardno Grogan Richards) November 2011
8. *Diggers Rest Retail and Employment Analysis* (SGS Economics and Planning Pty Ltd) September 2011
9. *Draft Biodiversity Assessment for Area 1073, Digger Rest, Victoria* (Ecology and Heritage Partners Pty Ltd) June 2011
10. *Diggers Rest Precinct Structure Plan Studies Hydrology and Drainage Assessment* (Design Flow) November 2011
11. *Geotechnical Investigation: Diggers Rest Precinct Structure Plan* (Tonkin & Taylor Ltd) July 2011
12. *Draft Landscape and Visual Assessment Report: Diggers Rest Precinct Structure Plan Background Study* (Tract Consultants Pty Ltd) September 2011
13. *Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment - Site History Review: Diggers Rest* (Golder Associates Pty Ltd) August 2011
14. *Preliminary Geotechnical Investigation, Contamination and Flora and Fauna Report, Diggers Rest* (Chadwick) September 2006
15. *Diggers Rest Growth Area Precinct Structure Plan Transport Assessment* (GTA Consultants) December 2011
16. *Valuation Report of Diggers Rest Precinct Structure Plan* (O'Briens Valuers and Property Consultants) November 2011
17. *Vineyard Road, Diggers Rest, Victoria, Updated Limited Phase I Environmental Site Assessment* (Golder Associates) June 2010



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