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INTRODUCTION

Municipal profile

The City of Casey is located in Melbourne's south-east region. It forms part of the Casey-Cardinia Growth Area and is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Australia. Covering an area of 395 square kilometres, Casey is characterised by a diverse environment that extends from the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges to the shores of Western Port, providing an interface between country Victoria (Gippsland) and metropolitan Melbourne.

Casey comprises five distinct geographical regions:

- The foothills of the Dandenong Ranges, which are characterised by areas used for grazing, horse agistment and passive recreation, are located north of Casey's population centre and include the rural-residential and village locales of Harkaway, Lysterfield South and Narre Warren North.
- The residential and commercial heart, which generally follows the Princes Highway and South Gippsland Highway corridors, and includes the suburbs of Beaconsfield (part), Berwick, Cranbourne, Doveton, Eumemmerring, Endeavour Hills, Hallam, Hampton Park and Narre Warren.
- The urban growth area, which is characterised by strong building activity and rapid population growth, is located centrally in Casey extending to the east, south and west of the established urban area, and includes the developing suburbs of Botanic Ridge, Clyde (part), Clyde North, Cranbourne East, Cranbourne North, Cranbourne West, Junction Village, Lynbrook, Lyndhurst and Narre Warren South.
- The farm belt, which is mainly used for market gardening, flower growing and grazing, is located in Casey's south and includes the rural and village locales of Clyde, Cranbourne South, Devon Meadows and Pearcedale. Part of the farm belt also contains urban growth areas that are transitioning from farming in Clyde, Cranbourne South and Devon Meadows.
- The Western Port coastal environs, which include the villages of Blind Bight, Cannons Creek, Tooradin and Warneet, contain extensive and internationally significant coastal reserves that also form a link between the popular tourist destinations of the Mornington Peninsula and Philip Island.

Prior to European settlement, the Bunurong and Wurundjeri peoples occupied the Casey area. As a result, a number of sites of significance to these indigenous communities are located throughout the municipality, particularly within coastal areas and near creeks and waterholes.

Casey is experiencing rapid growth in all areas, including housing, industry, and commercial and retail facilities, which is supported by the ongoing roll-out of associated infrastructure. New housing is the major growth catalyst and is particularly evident in the urban growth areas, which will benefit over time from major new and upgraded transport infrastructure to support the vibrant communities that are establishing.

Casey is served by a range of activity centres varying in size from local convenience activity centres to its two primary activity centres: Fountain Gate-Narre Warren CBD Metropolitan Activity Centre and Cranbourne Town Centre Major Activity Centre. The Fountain Gate-Narre Warren CBD is the urban focal point for the northern part of the municipality, being approximately 40 kilometres from Melbourne's GPO, while for the southern part it is the Cranbourne Town Centre, which is approximately 45 kilometres from the GPO. It is expected that the role of these two centres in providing high-level regional services will increase over the next decade as links with the Cardinia Employment Corridor and Gippsland along the two highway corridors continue to grow.

Casey's rapid growth, size and geographical diversity have added a layer of complexity to its planning. Its suburban areas are framed by a backdrop of open, green and fertile pasture land, an environmentally significant coastline in the south and wooded foothills in the north. Pressures brought about by urban development mean that planning is required to give careful consideration

to the protection of the City's resources, natural ecosystems and heritage places associated with its pre- and post-contact history, and to the promotion of integrated development planning to create a sustainable urban environment.

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Community context

Casey is a diverse and multi-cultural community, its Aboriginal cultural heritage having provided the foundation upon which this rich cultural diversity has developed over the years. The current community of Casey is an amalgam of a number of individual communities contained within discrete geographical boundaries; some are well established, while others are emerging and being shaped.

From a demographic perspective, the age and development of Casey's communities are not uniform. The issues in each community differ depending on their stage of evolution and their population mix. In developing communities such as Narre Warren South, new roads, community facilities and shops are most important. In established communities such as Endeavour Hills, youth issues are more prominent. In older communities such as Doveton, the refurbishment or redevelopment of community facilities is important. There are many areas with a growing aged population that require access to a broad range of services and facilities, including home care, meals-on-wheels and seniors' clubrooms, while there are some facilities, such as shared paths, that benefit all age groups and communities.

Like many of metropolitan Melbourne's outer municipalities, Casey is experiencing significant development pressures in its established residential areas. These pressures are characterised by the substantial investment in new medium-density housing, stemming from the comparatively low cost and generous size of residential allotments in older areas when compared to other metropolitan municipalities. The South East Growth Corridor Plan seeks to provide for further growth in these areas, as well as forming and developing new communities in areas such as Cranbourne West, Cranbourne North and Clyde North.

In managing these development pressures there is a need to identify and protect various intrinsic community values, such as the maintenance of Casey's "country feel, city living" image. To this end, Council recognises that its local areas have different neighbourhood characteristics, such as built form, landscape features and community identity, and acknowledges that new and infill development must be appropriately managed to ensure these characteristics are retained and enhanced.

The building and strengthening of all communities, in terms of physical planning and community development and recognising their diverse needs, values and characteristics, will be key tools in managing development pressures into the future. It will underpin the land use planning decisions by Council and ensure that the balance of competing planning, economic, social and environmental objectives is managed in a way that reflects local community values and aspirations.

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Environmental context

Casey boasts a beautiful and diverse environment that is characterised by extensive areas of land with outstanding agricultural, natural landscape, cultural heritage or environmental value. These include the Western Port coastal environs that are listed under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne and Churchill National Park. Most of these areas fall within the Southern Ranges, Westernport and South East Green Wedges that are set out under *Plan Melbourne* Casey shares its Green Wedges with neighbouring and nearby municipalities:

- South East – Frankston, Greater Dandenong and Kingston.
- Southern Ranges – Cardinia, Knox and Yarra Ranges.
- Westernport – Cardinia and Frankston.

CASEY PLANNING SCHEME

The protection and management of these areas, and the ecosystems that underpin them, are important to ensure the City maintains soil fertility and clean, fresh air and water. The bushland and waterways provide recreational opportunities and are a source of inspiration, pride and cultural identity. They also provide both permanent and seasonal habitat for a broad range of native animals, birds, reptiles, insects and microbes, including some rare species listed under Commonwealth legislation and protected by international treaties.

However, it is widely acknowledged that the biological diversity of the City is in a state of decline, primarily from residential, industrial and agricultural development pressures, including those pressures arising from the need to satisfy the considerable recreational demands of a large growing population. The resultant land use impacts have reduced the pre-settlement biodiversity of the municipality to about 7 per cent of its former extent.

As such, the management of remnant vegetation and fauna throughout the City is important in order to achieve a net gain in the extent and quality of native vegetation, and protect and conserve biodiversity. Of particular importance is the protection and enhancement of biolink corridors that provide critical linkages for the survival of threatened species in Casey, such as the Southern Brown Bandicoot and the Dwarf Galaxias. In general, the most extensive and highest quality vegetation remnants and fauna habitats are found on public land, such as within Churchill National Park, the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne and the Western Port coastal environs. However, biodiversity resources on private land include some of the rarest and most threatened flora and fauna populations and vegetation types within the region.

These sites need to be protected through the planning process, not only on a case-by-case basis but also as part of a coordinated strategic approach that has regard to the State Government's Native Vegetation Framework. This would enable the retention of unique examples of pre-existing flora and fauna, the protection of important sites and the provision of a future seed resource for revegetation using locally indigenous species.

Water management is a critical component of the conservation of biodiversity. There is a fundamental link between what we do on the land and the quality of our waterways, and the quantity, quality and seasonal flow of water all contribute to the health of aquatic environments. The major waterways of the City include Cardinia, Dandenong, Eumemmerring and Troups Creeks, the Hallam Valley Main Drain and Western Port itself. There is a need to prevent and reduce stormwater impacts on waterways, while opportunities exist to develop a series of green corridors and recreational linkages along them. The wider management of catchments at a regional level is also important in achieving the coordination of land and water management programs.

Increasing controls on waste collection and disposal, combined with State-legislated targets for the recovery of resources, present significant challenges for waste management in Casey. Appropriate locations for waste disposal or resource-recovery facilities in the metropolitan region are scarce, and Council has a significant role in the protection of existing sites, the planning for future sites and the application of appropriate waste management technologies.

At a broader level, climate change predictions necessitate planning for a carbon-constrained future in which greenhouse gas emissions will have to be limited and the reliance on non-renewable resources will need to be reduced. As a consequence, people will need to change the nature and patterns of energy generation and use, manage resources more efficiently, modify the way that buildings are designed and sited, and alter transport usage and some agricultural and land use practices. This will require a commitment by both the public and private sector to embrace new green technologies and achieve land use and development outcomes focused on environmentally sustainable solutions. The low-lying areas along the Western Port coast, including the villages of Cannons Creek, Tooradin and Warneet, have been identified as being sensitive to the impacts of climate change from rising sea levels.

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C233**Economic context**

The City of Casey has a broad economic base that is reflective of the two main periods of the City's development: pre-World War 2, when the City was broadly rural and newly settled, and the post-war expansion of population and settlement that is continuing today.

The pre-war period has left the municipality with a strong agricultural base that includes horticultural and animal husbandry industries, with a particular focus on market gardens, dog breeding and the equine industry. Most of these industries are located in the south and east of the municipality.

There is also the presence of number of extractive industries, such as clay, sand and rock.

The post-war period led to continued economic expansion and the emergence of population-driven employment sectors. Typically, these jobs fell within the building and construction, manufacturing, retail goods and services, professional, education and health services' sectors. The City has a good range of these industries, with a large manufacturing precinct located in Hallam, smaller service industries' precincts located in Doveton, Cranbourne, Narre Warren and Berwick. Berwick has a strong medical and education focus, highlighted by the Casey and St John of God Hospitals, the Chisholm Institute of TAFE and Federation University campuses. Retail, office and professional services' jobs are located in the key activity centres, such as Fountain-Gate-Narre Warren CBD, Cranbourne Town Centre and Berwick Village.

As Casey will continue to experience significant population and housing growth for the foreseeable future, growth in population-driven employment sectors will continue to expand and provide a broad range of employment options. However, as the structure of the economy is changing, new types of jobs will be created based around knowledge, innovation and technological expertise. It is these types of jobs that need to be secured and grown if Casey is able to provide suitable employment choices for its residents.

With a number of highly valued natural assets, including the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne, Cranbourne Racecourse, the Ramsar-listed wetlands along the Western Port coastline, Tooradin and Warneet boat launching facilities, Churchill National Park, Lysterfield Park and the Dandenong Police Paddocks Reserve, tourism will also be a key employment sector for the future.

The municipality also sits within a broader regional context, with the neighbouring City of Greater Dandenong, and Dandenong South in particular, being a significant employment destination for Casey's residents. In the future, the Shire of Cardinia will also be an important employment destination for Casey's residents, with Casey itself ultimately fulfilling a similar role for residents of these municipalities. Improving public transport and road connections to both municipalities will therefore be an important objective for the future.

The strength of Casey's economy has rested on retail, medical, service industry, manufacturing, construction and agribusinesses. It is important for Casey to continue to attract new businesses that are employment generators and add value to the existing goods and services that are produced and distributed in the City.

There is also a need to continue to attract major new businesses to the region that not only support the growth in residential population, but also help to diversify the economy. Promoting diverse business types and employment is critical to a developing city that comprises a range of backgrounds and skills in the resident population base.

New clusters of technology- and export-oriented industries are also integral to a developing economy to generate wealth, attract skilled staff and to create a clear point of difference for a municipality. Successful establishment of these innovative clusters also provides a strategic base for training, research and development, as well as new venture capital.

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Casey's municipal neighbours are Yarra Ranges and Knox to the north, Greater Dandenong and Frankston to the west, Mornington Peninsula to the south and Cardinia to the east. Excluding Yarra Ranges and Knox, Casey and its other four neighbours had a combined population of approximately

745,700 people in 2011, according to State Government estimates. The population of the region is forecast to grow to over 1,038,000 people by 2031, making it similar in size to the City of Adelaide and an important region in its own right.

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