

## Context

### What is a Municipal Strategic Statement?

The role of the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) is to provide a vision for the future development of the Melton City. The MSS broadly reflects state government planning policy, as well as clearly articulating the planning objectives and strategies of the Melton City Council and its community.

The MSS is essentially a summary of Council's strategic land use plans. It sets out a vision for the future of the municipality, and importantly, provides advice and direction to developers and the community on how this vision will be achieved.

The Melton City Council Municipal Strategic Statement contains a description of present-day Melton City and then looks to the future to see what the City may be in 2015. It also explains Council's key planning objectives, and shows how these will be used to evaluate and assess all applications for use and development. The MSS provides strategic direction for various land use units and activity areas in the City. The MSS finally explains how the Melton Planning Scheme will be implemented, its linkages with other plans and policies and when it will be reviewed and re-evaluated.

The City of Melton's Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) has been developed to set the strategic framework and directions for the future of Melton. The policy statements within Melton's MSS have not been developed in isolation of existing policy. They have been developed to complement, implement and extend a range of existing local, regional, state and federal policies.

Melton's MSS is the co-ordinating document for all existing local policies impacting on land use. It also:

- is consistent with current State land use policies and draws from relevant Regional and Federal policies.
- extends State, Regional and Federal policies down to a local level from general strategies to specific strategies and actions.
- identifies areas of local policy deficiency and sets targets for their development and implementation.

### State Policy Context

The State Government outlined its long-term strategic intentions for Melbourne in *Living Suburbs - A Policy for Metropolitan Melbourne into the 21st Century* (1995). This document establishes the State Government's aim to strengthen Melbourne's suburban foundations by improving housing, parks, schools, health and community services, recreational facilities, job opportunities and metropolitan transport. In addition, the State Government has a State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) at Clauses 11-19 of all planning schemes in Victoria.

"Living Suburbs" identifies five strategic directions for metropolitan Melbourne over the next 20 years and the broad objectives and directions established in Living Suburbs are to guide the development of more detailed policies and actions developed at a State, regional or local level. Melton Council has ensured that the strategic directions set by Melton's MSS are consistent with State Policy as contained in Living Suburbs and the SPPF.

## Regional Policy Context

Melton City is part of the western region of Melbourne and it has traditionally been seen as a growth area along with its adjoining municipalities of Brimbank, Hume and Wyndham. Whilst population growth in the western area has been strong for the past twenty years or so, employment growth has failed to keep pace and so the western area is characterised by high levels of unemployment (especially amongst young people) and relative poverty compared with other areas of Melbourne.

Access to and from the western region has been markedly improved with the completion of the Western Ring Road. The Ring Road connects the Hume Highway with the Princes Highway and Westgate Freeway and offers excellent car and truck access to various points in between. The completion of this road is having an enormous impact on land use patterns and investor behaviour in the western region. As a consequence, areas such as Laverton North in particular, are experiencing considerable demand from firms such as freight distribution and warehousing companies.

The Western Regional Development Organisation (WREDO) was established under the now defunct Federal Government Regional Development Program to develop an economic development strategy for the Western Melbourne Region. This region includes the Local Government areas of Brimbank, Moonee Valley, Maribyrnong, Hobsons Bay, Wyndham and Melton. The City of Melton supports the Economic Development Strategy developed by WREDO which aims to improve the image of the Western Melbourne region and rectify the region's lack of employment opportunities. The WREDO strategy identifies the need for all councils in the region to improve communications and consultation with each other and key state agencies - particularly those that have a major infrastructure planning and development role.

Melton's MSS takes account of the regional strategic directions set by WREDO. Most prominently, Melton has further developed the concept of the Toolern Employment Node in its MSS as a direct response to WREDO initiatives.

## Local Policy Context

The *1996-97 Melton Shire Council Corporate Plan* is the overarching policy document at a local level. In a similar manner to *Living Suburbs* driving the MSS from a metropolitan level, the Melton City Council Corporate Plan drives the MSS through its municipal strategic framework or "municipal strategic direction"

The Corporate Plan's municipal strategic directions that have impacted on the development of Melton's MSS include:

- Improve Sustainable Living
- Generate Strong Economic and Employment Growth
- Build a Learning Community
- Effective Communication and Promotion

