

PSP2.0

Merrifield North

**WURUNDJERI WOI-WURRUNG
COUNTRY**

Precinct Structure Plan Pitching Summary Report

AUGUST 2025

Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

The Victorian Planning Authority proudly acknowledges First Peoples Communities throughout Victoria and their rich and enduring culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

We acknowledge Aboriginal people as Australia's First Peoples and as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waters and their inherent rights to Country. We respect this enduring connection.

We recognise and value the ongoing contribution of First Peoples Communities to Victorian life and how this enriches our connection to Victoria.

We embrace the Government's commitment to self-determination and seek to embed this in our work.

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the land to which the Precinct Structure plan applies.

The Merrifield North Precinct is located on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People, who form part of the five clans of the Kulin Nation, represented by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People as the Aboriginal Traditional Owners of their unceded Country. We acknowledge their ongoing connection to this land, and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Victorian Planning Authority's commitment

The Victorian Planning Authority commits to continuing to improve our practices, to better protect and acknowledge Aboriginal values and heritage in our plans, precinct structure plans and strategic documents.

The protection of tangible and intangible Aboriginal cultural heritage is an important part of continuing cultural practice, understanding history and recognition of the Traditional Owners of Victoria. Commonwealth and State Acts and Regulations provide protection of places and areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance.

The ultimate custodians of Aboriginal cultural heritage are Traditional Owners, including groups formally recognised as Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) which are appointed by the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. In 2024 there were 12 RAPs with decision-making responsibilities for approximately 77.5 per cent of Victoria. Traditional Owner Groups without formal recognition also have a vital role to play as key partners and stakeholders.

Strategic planning for Aboriginal cultural heritage involves a range of different stakeholders including State Government agencies, local government, developers, landowners, and community groups.

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Introduction

What is Pitching?

The purpose of pitching is to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to discuss opportunities, challenges, and aspirations for a precinct. For government agencies, pitching activities are an opportunity to present relevant background information and policy that will need to be considered when preparing the PSP.

For Merrifield North, pitching activities consisted of online surveys and individual meetings (hybrid-format) with key stakeholders and others that directly requested to attend a pitching session.

VPA would like to thank all stakeholders who attended and participated in the Merrifield North Precinct (MNP) pitching sessions held in June 2025.

The purpose of the MNP pitching activities was to:

WHAT:	HOW:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand core precinct issues early in the planning process - Work with project stakeholders towards fostering a collaborative working group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invite stakeholders to present their ideas and concerns - Provide a clear, transparent, and inclusive consultation program - Encourage discussion of innovative ideas and alternative processes

Ultimately, the pitching activities will inform the MNP vision and purpose and development of a future precinct plan.

Purpose of this document

This document summarises the information captured during the MNP pitching activities. It includes an outline of the key issues and opportunities raised during all pitching activities in both a written and spatial format, providing attendees with further information on what to expect at the upcoming MNP Visioning & Purpose Forum anticipated for late July 2025 and the Co-Design Workshop envisaged for early 2026.

The information gathered in the pitching activities helped identify the issues, challenges, opportunities, and innovations for MNP. This document provides a summary of key themes raised during the pitching activities.

Figure 1 Pitching Process

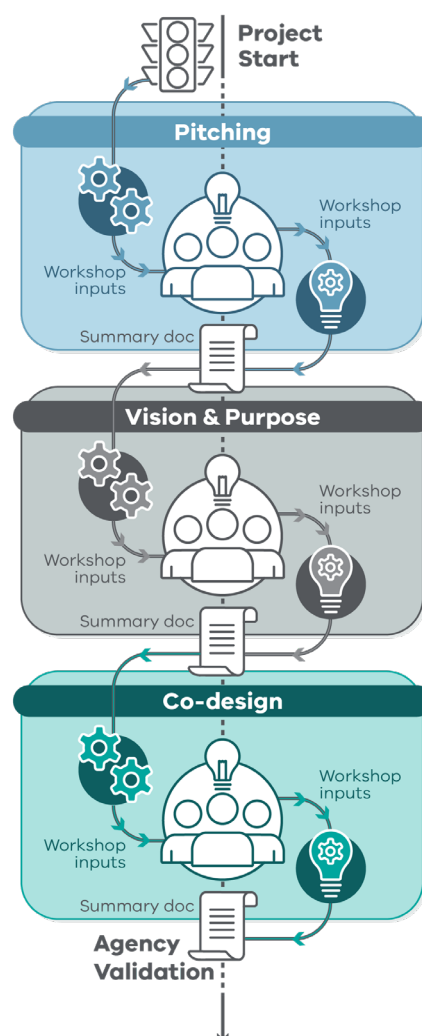
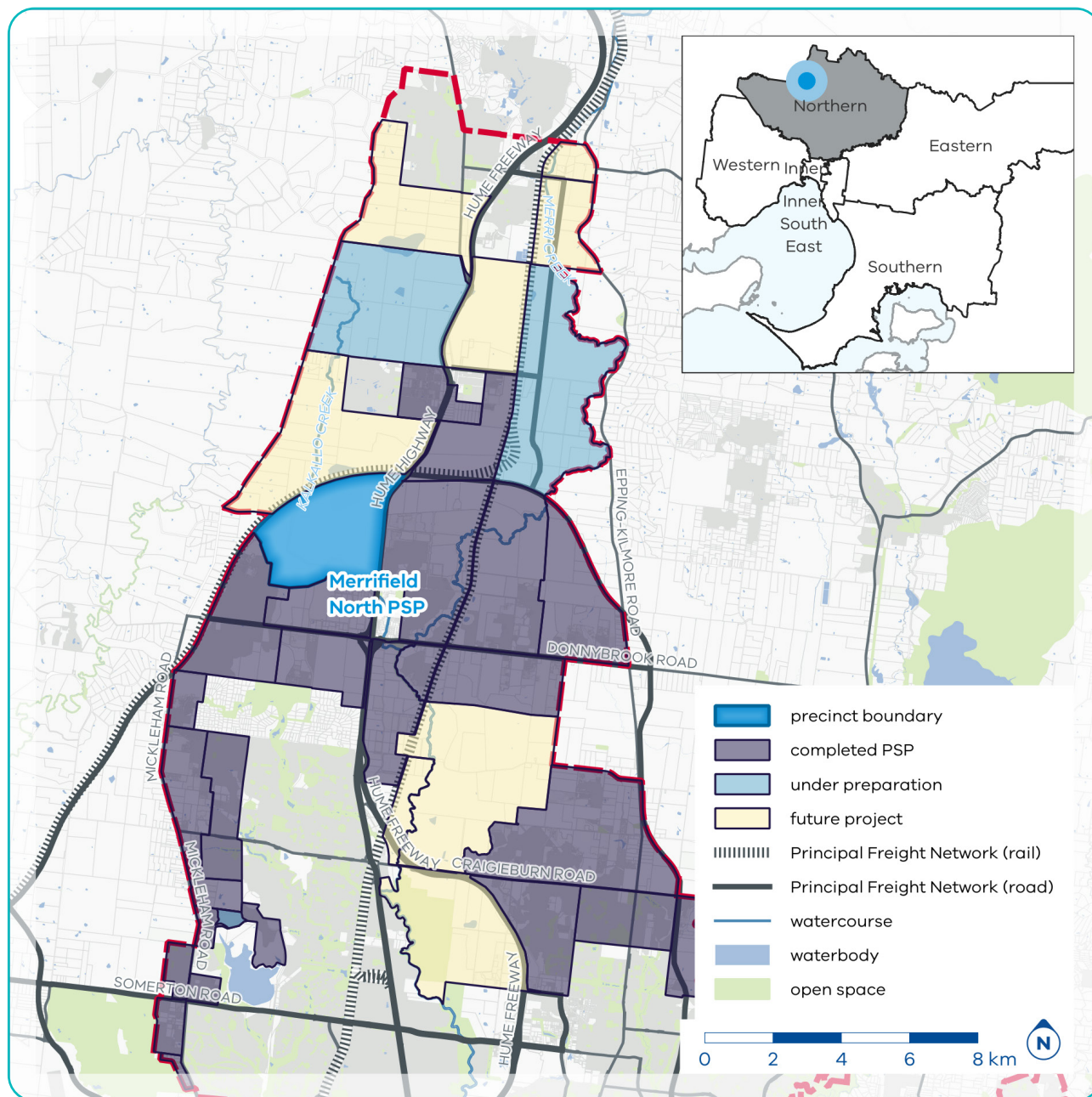


Figure 2 Regional Context Plan



Who attended the sessions?

Pitching activities were conducted with representatives from state and local government, agencies, key project stakeholders, community and industry groups and infrastructure providers. All precinct landowners were invited to participate. A total of 15 hybrid pitching sessions were conducted and 12 completed online surveys submitted.

Attendees included:

Traditional Owners

- Wurrundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC)

Government departments and agencies

- Department of Transport and Planning – Transport (DTP-T)
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)
 - Water and Catchments
 - Regions, Environment, Climate Action and First Peoples
- Melbourne Water
- Parks Victoria
- First People's State Relations (FPSR)
- Yarra Valley Water
- APA Group

Council

- Hume City Council
- Mitchell Shire Council

Other interested parties

- Eight private landowners/ developers
- Merri Creek Management Committee
- Friends of Merri Creek

Background

The MNP is a significant project for the Victorian Planning Authority. It presents an opportunity to lead the delivery of a new, large-scale, employment precinct located close to extensive transport infrastructure, both existing and proposed. The ultimate employment and other land use designations for the precinct will be determined through the related PSP process.

A Desktop Due Diligence report for Merrifield North was prepared in June 2024. The report sought to:

- Discover any significant barriers to progressing the project during the plan preparation phase.
- Ensure a timely and cost-effective plan preparation process.
- Give agencies/departments additional early notice for pre-planning so they can contribute to plan preparation.

The assessment identified two key issues to be resolved:

- The significance and extent to be retained of Inverlochy Wetland (also known as “Inverlochy Swamp”); and
- The subsequent alignment of Aitken Boulevard.

Merrifield North was identified as a ‘Horizon 2’ project in the 2024/25 VPA Business Plan requiring commencement of the project between 2025/26 and 2028/29 with completion by 2033. The Economic Growth Statement (December 2024), however, fast-tracked the project, allowing for commencement in the 2024/25 financial year and requiring completion by the end of the 2028 calendar year. As a result, resolution of identified due diligence issues will occur in conjunction with plan preparation to ensure the PSP can be completed by the end of 2028.

Why MNP?

The MNP is situated close to existing and proposed major transport infrastructure, including the Hume Freeway, the proposed Outer Metropolitan Ring Road (OMR), Melbourne Airport, and the proposed Beveridge Interstate Freight Terminal (BIFT). This connectivity to key freight, road, rail, and public transport networks enhances the precinct’s desirability as a future employment hub.

The MNP has been identified as a strategically important location for employment uses in the North Growth Corridor Plan (NGCP). The NGCP designates the precinct for industrial and business land use in appreciation of its locational advantages and potential to support long-term economic growth. The Melbourne Industrial and Commercial Land Use Plan (MICLUP) further reinforces the strategic importance of Merrifield North by identifying it as a Future State Significant Industrial Area.

Lastly, the Victorian Government’s Economic Growth Statement (EGS) highlights Merrifield North as a key employment precinct. The EGS identifies the need to complete a Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) for the area by the end of the 2028 calendar year to support the delivery of approximately 4,700 new jobs. As part of this planning process, both a PSP and Infrastructure Contributions Plan (ICP) will be prepared.

Together, these strategic plans and policies confirm the importance of the MNP in meeting long-term employment land needs.

Precinct features

MNP is approximately 988ha in size (refer to Figure 2 for the regional context and Figure 3 for the study area) and has the following key features:

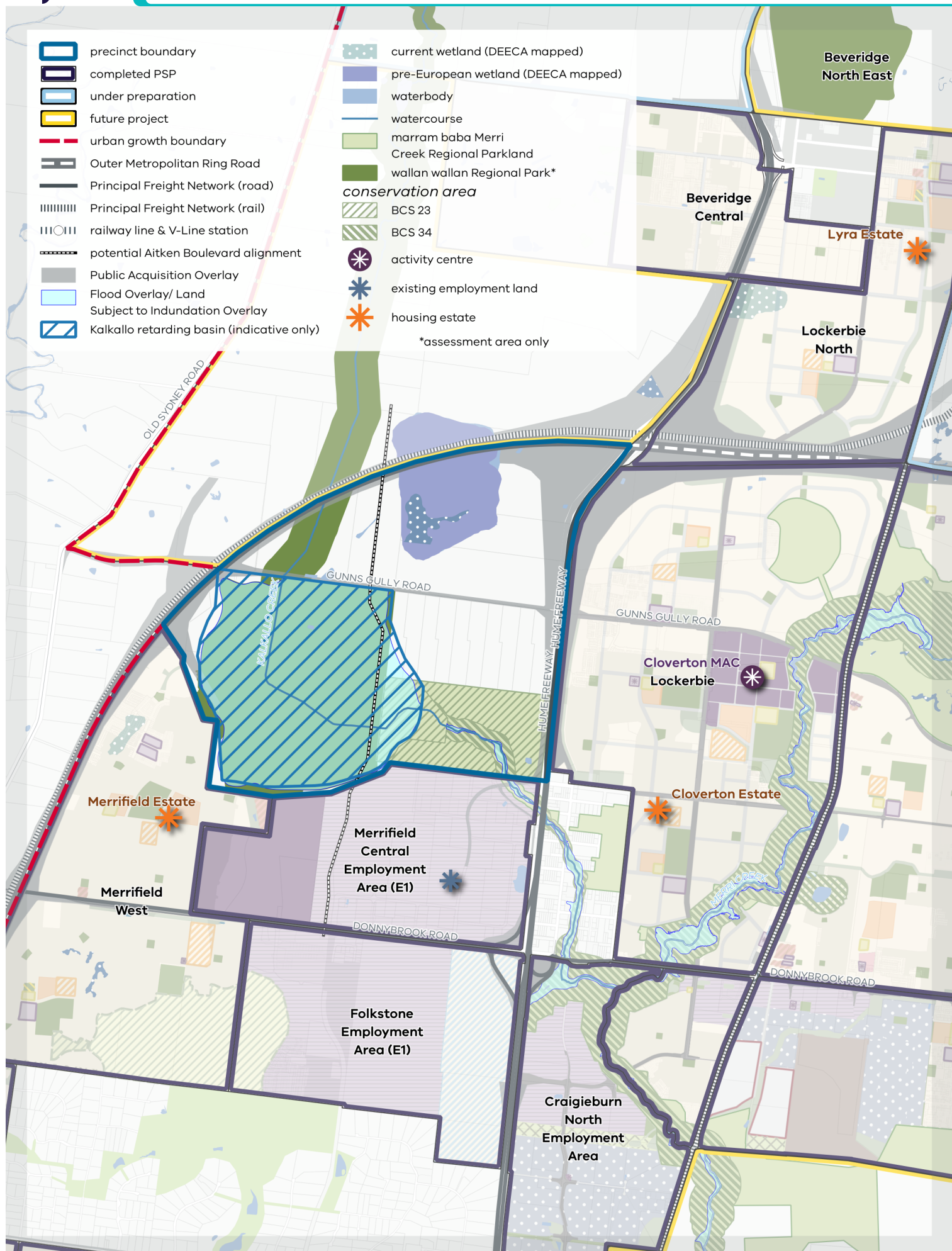
- 29 property titles, across both government agency and private ownership.
- An undulating topography that slopes upwards from the west towards the Hume Freeway and downwards from the north towards Kalkallo Creek and other unnamed waterways.
- Kalkallo Creek
- The Western Outer Ring Main (WORM) high- pressure gas pipeline.
- Gunns Gully Road, an existing east-west road connecting to the Hume Freeway.
- Scattered trees.
- Public Acquisition Overlays (PAOs) associated with the OMR, Hume Freeway, and Gunns Gully Road.
- Existing agricultural and residential land uses.
- Inverlochy Wetlands.
- Stony undulating plains distributed primarily in the eastern sections of the precinct.
- Kalkallo Retarding Basin (KRB) located in the south west on land owned by the Melbourne Water Corporation.
- Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) areas 23 and 34.
- Future marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands.

The precinct interfaces with the following features:

- The Hume Freeway to the east.
- The proposed Outer Metropolitan Ring Road (OMR) to the west and north.
- Merrifield West residential precinct to the south-west (PSP completed).
- The Beveridge South West precinct to the north (Residential PSP scheduled for Horizon 2).

The wider surrounding area is characterised by:

- The Beveridge Central PSP (completed), with an anticipated population of approximately 9,500 people, and Mandalay Estate (residential) to the north and west.
- Northern Freight PSP to the north-east which is currently under preparation. The Beveridge Interstate Freight Terminal (BIFT) is planned for this precinct and will provide freight and logistic terminal services. This PSP will connect with the MNP via the OMR, which will form part of the Principal Freight Network (PFN).
- Lockerbie PSP and Lockerbie North PSP to the east including the Cloverton Estate (residential) and the proposed Cloverton Metropolitan Activity Centre (MAC), and Lyra Estate (residential), respectively. The future population of the Lockerbie and Lockerbie North PSPs are approximately 29,000 and 12,500 people, respectively. Cloverton MAC is intended to generate approximately 50,000 jobs in the long-term and will function as a primary employment and service hub for emerging suburbs in the north.
- In addition to the above, other approved PSPs (refer to Figure 3).



Emerging themes

The information gathered during pitching activities has been analysed and sorted into five emerging themes.

The emerging themes shape the development of the vision and objectives for the precinct. They connect to the eventual land use plan as part of the co-design process.

In addition, MNP will consider (where relevant) the PSP Guidelines and the seven hallmarks of the 20-minute neighbourhood to understand initial opportunities/ constraints and to ensure key metrics are achieved (refer to Figure 4).

Table 6 outlines how each emerging theme relates to the PSP Guidelines and the 20-minute neighbourhood hallmarks.

Figure 4 PSP Guidelines and the 20-minute neighbourhood hallmarks



Table 6 Emerging Themes

Emerging Themes	PSP Guidelines and the 20 minute neighbourhood hallmarks
EMERGING THEME 1 – Respect and enhance the existing cultural heritage and environmental values of the area.	
EMERGING THEME 2 – Support development of an employment precinct that will attract a range of economic development opportunities, industry and jobs to the region.	
EMERGING THEME 3 – Create a transport network that connects people to jobs and services efficiently.	
EMERGING THEME 4 – Manage water and drainage solutions on site effectively while protecting the natural environment.	
EMERGING THEME 5 – Establish service network infrastructure that is optimised and efficient.	
EMERGING THEME 6 – Coordinate staging that supports timely and orderly PSP implementation.	



High Quality Public Realm



Connect People to Jobs and Services



Thriving Local Economies



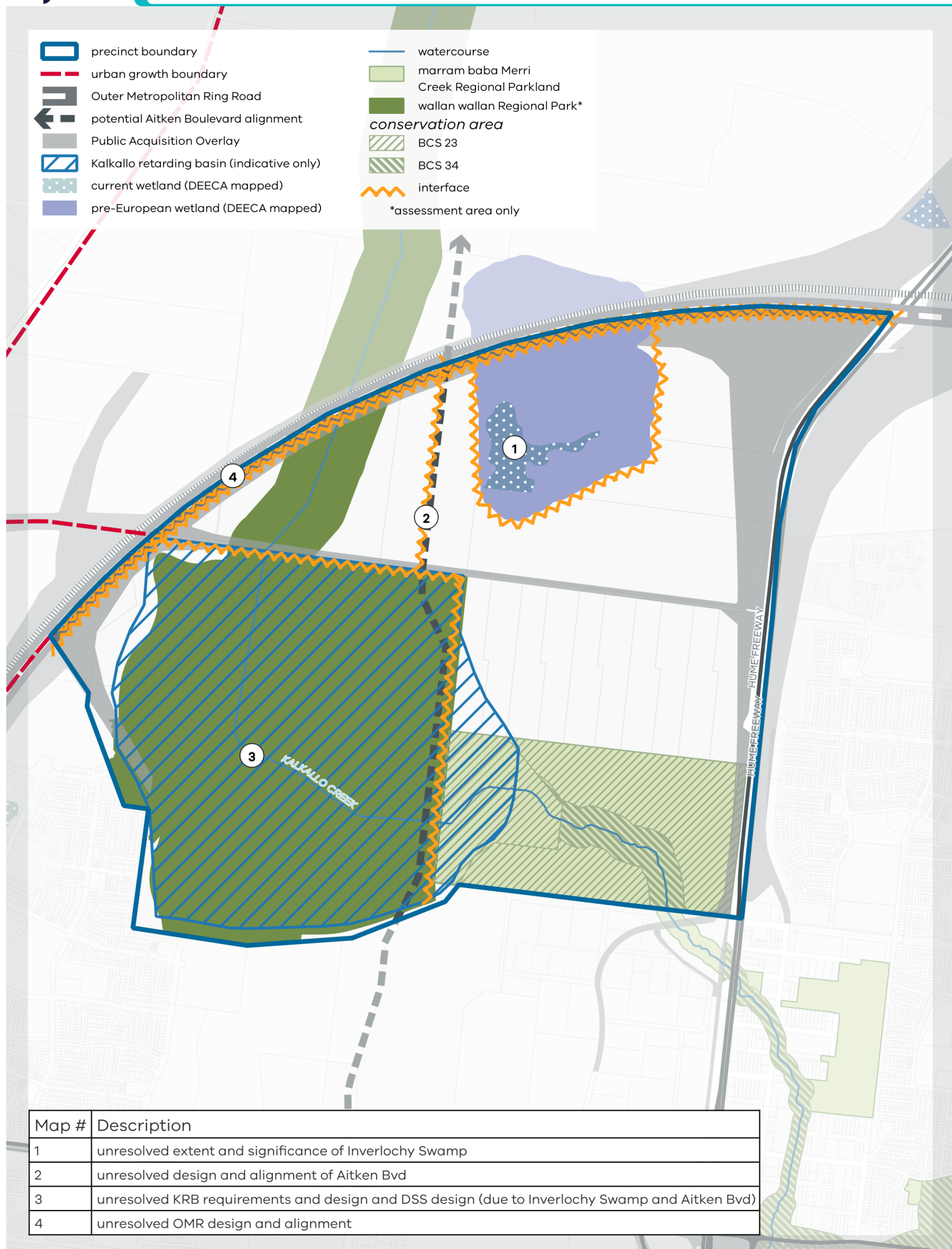
Services and Destinations

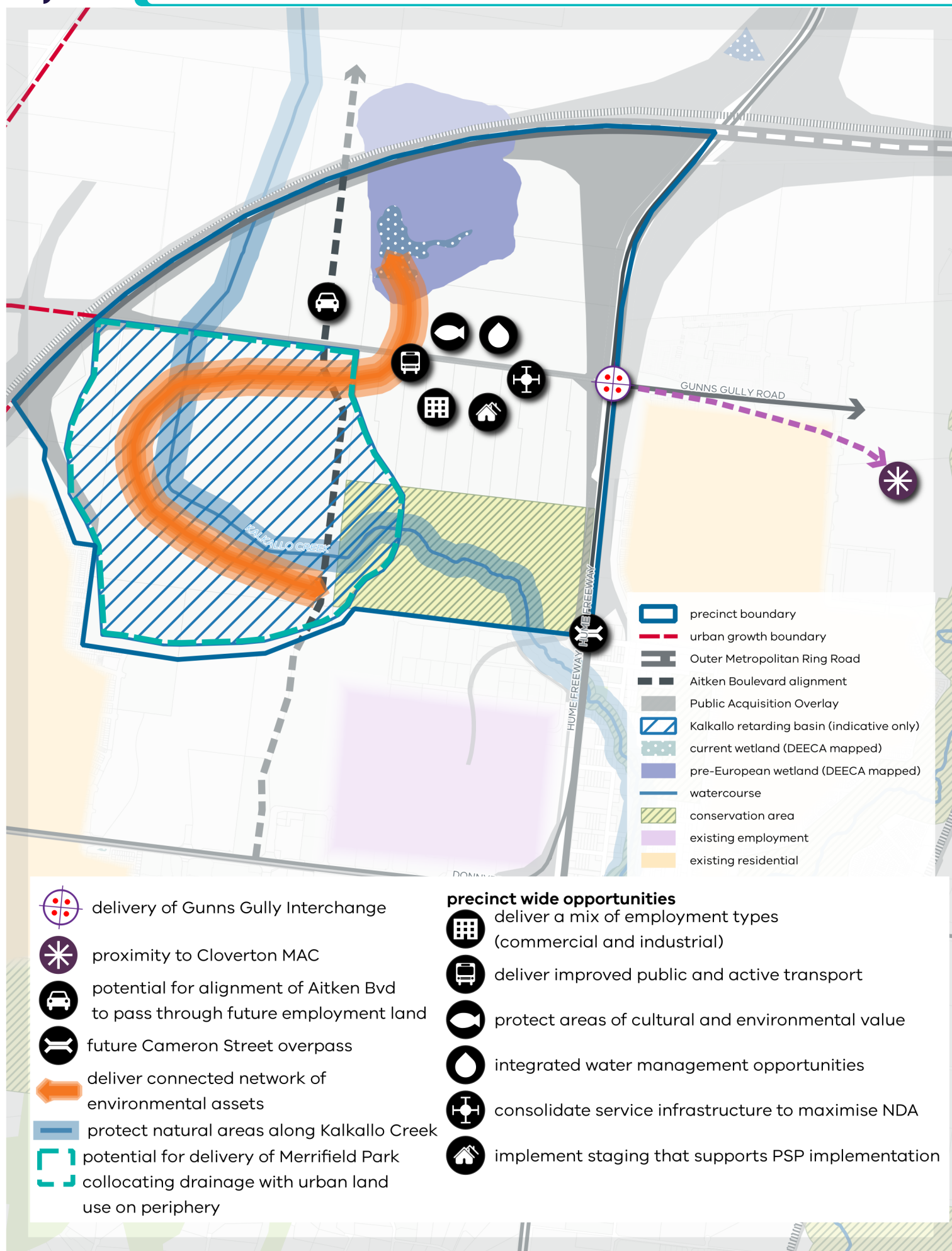


Safe, Accessible and Well Connected



Infrastructure Co-ordination





EMERGING THEME 1

Respect and enhance the existing **cultural heritage and environmental values** of the area.

The cultural heritage and environmental values of the precinct are unique and highly valued by some stakeholders. Stakeholder engagement has highlighted the importance of considering these values while also balancing the need to deliver much-needed employment land and transport infrastructure in the precinct. Identified cultural heritage and environmental values include Inverlochy Wetlands, Kalkallo Creek, stony undulating plains, and the future marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands within BCS areas 23 and 34.

Merrifield North provides an opportunity to explore and embed Aboriginal cultural heritage outcomes and environmental values as part of the future precinct.

DEECA has completed an update of the State Wetland Inventory which now includes 400,000 wetlands. The review was completed using existing datasets, while no onsite surveys were completed, and no new or physical mapping was conducted as part of the update. DEECA has not completed an update of the pre-European wetland dataset citing a lack of capacity.

Ideas and opportunities shared:

- The importance of resolving the extent and significance of Inverlochy Wetlands was highlighted by many stakeholders as a key issue that must be addressed. Stakeholder perspectives included:
 - Concern regarding the DEECA methodology to identify the current extent of Inverlochy Wetlands and advocacy for a detailed site assessment.
 - Need for a hydrologist-led assessment of Inverlochy Wetlands and that this should include an analysis of the maximum extent of inundation, soil, and vegetation.
 - Restoration of Inverlochy Wetlands to act as a focal point for the precinct.
- Deliver a network of conservation reserves, waterways, and public open spaces that:
 - Protects cultural heritage and biodiversity.
 - Provides stormwater treatment, flood management, and climate mitigation opportunities.
 - Offers quality open spaces for recreation opportunities.
 - Connects marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parklands with the proposed Wallan Wallan Regional Park (WWRP) via a shared path along Kalkallo Creek adjacent to conservation areas.
- Protect natural areas along Kalkallo Creek beyond the conservation area boundary to preserve ecological values and maintain a connection with BCS area 34.
- Partial use of the KRB site for the proposed future Merrifield Park, which could be the centrepiece of the precinct and guide planning for the surrounding portions of the precinct.
- There is a presence of high value habitat to the north of Gunns Gully Road as well as 'Seasonal Herbaceous Wetlands' and 'Plains Grass Lands', both critically endangered Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs), in the KRB site. Stakeholder perspectives included:
 - No native vegetation or conservation values have been identified in the KRB site as they are not included in the MSA BCS.
 - There is no justification for environmental values extending north of Gunns Gully Road. They indicated that a flora and fauna assessment conducted for their site located south of Gunns Gully Road found no significant flora or fauna.
- Protect seasonal herbaceous wetlands, BCS areas, and Growling Grassland Frog and Legless Lizard habitats. This includes:
 - Minimising the impact of outflow from the KRB into Kalkallo Creek.
 - Avoiding alignment of Aitken Boulevard through the conservation area.
 - Implementing a buffer between the BCS area and future urban development.
 - Implementing appropriate planning provisions for conservation areas.

- Preparing a conservation management plan and ensure planning provisions for implementation and funding are in place.
- Establishing management agreements with landowners under the Conservation Forests and Lands Act 1987 or transfer to the Crown.
- Retain all natural areas of waterways that feed into the KRB.
 - Kalkallo Creek tributaries should be retained and sensitively restored while considering increased pressure from stormwater and the presence of sodic soils.
- Avoid exposure of sodic soils during the construction phase to ensure uncontrolled erosion does not occur.
 - Another stakeholder noted that sodic soils issues can be managed using pipelines for waterways.
- Planning consideration should be given to the marram baba Merri Creek Regional Parkland and the WWRP.
- Several stakeholders indicated that they have been engaging with Aboriginal cultural, European heritage groups, or both on matters of heritage while researching their respective sites.

Key risks identified:

- Low-lying land subject to inundation restricts where key infrastructure can be placed. This could put pressure on natural areas.
- Excess stormwater in waterways due to upstream development.
- Erosion of sodic soils resulting in downstream sediment pollution.
- Soil erosion in areas dedicated to natural values due to land development pressure.
- Impacts on conservation areas caused by large infrastructure such as roads including the OMR and Aitken Boulevard.
- Inappropriate development interfacing conservation areas.
- Encroachment of weeds and/or exotic species.
- Lack of connection to facilitate the movement of fauna.

- Collaboration with multiple project stakeholders on complex considerations, which may introduce associated risks to timely delivery of project outcomes.

Other considerations:

VPA is engaging with key stakeholders, including the WWCHAC, to resolve the extent and significance of Inverloch Wetlands and the development of a future plan for the MNP.

An Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Impact

- **Assessment and Cultural Values**
Assessment will be undertaken to assist with determining the extent and significance of Inverloch Wetland and to identify any other cultural heritage sites in the precinct.
- Additionally, a project steering committee, project advisory committee and interested parties project reference group will be formed to assist with the determination of the extent and significance of Inverloch Wetlands.
- The Victorian Grassland Earless Dragon (VGED) habitat has been identified within the MNP by DEECA. In addition to being protected under the Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988, VGED are also protected as a critically endangered species under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act). Planning considerations will be guided by advice from DEECA.
- A post-European Heritage Assessment will be undertaken to identify any historic heritage sites and assess their value. This information will be used to help determine precinct land uses, where relevant.
- Some stakeholders have indicated they have an independent heritage and environmental values assessment for the precinct and surrounding areas. All have confirmed they are willing to share these with the VPA. Assessment of these studies will inform precinct planning for Merrifield North.

EMERGING THEME 2

Support development of an **employment precinct** that will attract a range of economic development opportunities, industry, and jobs to the region.

Merrifield North has been identified as a future employment precinct in multiple existing strategic documents (please see Background).

The intent for the MNP is to provide an opportunity to meet employment land needs and boost related economic development opportunities. Merrifield North PSP will unlock zoned land for employment uses, which respond to the current demand for employment land use in the North Growth Corridor.

Ideas and opportunities shared:

- Industrial land supply is at an all-time low and previous work to determine demand used flawed methodology resulting in assumptions that are no longer valid.
- Deliver a precinct that unlocks significant industrial land supply providing local job opportunities to support surrounding residential areas and facilitate local living.
 - While there is some employment land in the area, demand exceeds supply resulting in few employment land use opportunities.
- Provide a mix of both commercial and industrial land uses at higher densities that require smaller building footprints and incorporate office building opportunities, with the following specific ideas shared:
 - Caribbean Gardens (Melbourne), Tonsley Innovation District (Adelaide), and Chiswick Park (London) were referenced as ideal case studies for Merrifield North.
 - Merrifield North should differentiate itself from surrounding precincts, such as Cloverton MAC, to avoid 'cannibalising' those precincts.
 - Employment land should deliver a wide range of employment needs, such as freight and logistics, local advanced manufacturing, service industries, education and, research and development.
- A mix of tenancy types should be provided to encourage startup businesses to locate in the precinct.
- Employment-generating land uses in the Industrial 1 Zone would be preferred.
- The region has 'excessive' amounts of warehousing and large factories, and higher-density outputs should be considered.
- Create a business hub at the intersection of Aitken Boulevard and Gunns Gully Road if the Aitken Boulevard alignment is shifted to the east.
- Provide land use complementary to the surrounding urban areas.
 - A potential hospital and university have been proposed for Merrifield Central in Hume Integrated Growth Area Plan (HIGAP), just south of Merrifield North.
 - It was noted that an assessment to determine how to integrate the MNP with the surrounding areas is being conducted.
- Data centres are not preferred for the precinct as they require a large amount of land take and provide few jobs.
- While most stakeholders indicated a preference for employment land uses, some pointed to an opportunity to deliver mixed land uses including residential, medical, education, restricted retail, and retirement villages in the precinct.

Other considerations:

The VPA will undertake an employment needs assessment for the precinct to identify the types of jobs needed in the precinct and broader region in the short, long, and very long terms. The employment needs assessment will inform the Merrifield North PSP.

VPA will continue to work with the councils and stakeholders to understand the needs of industry to inform planning for Merrifield North.

Future employment and industrial land uses, their locations, and appropriate zoning will be determined after technical assessments have been completed and will be tested with stakeholders and landowners at the co-design workshop in early 2026.

EMERGING THEME 3

Create a **transport network** that connects people to jobs and services efficiently.

Merrifield North is strategically located close to a range of existing and planned state significant transport assets, including the Hume Freeway, and the planned OMR) and Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal (BIFT). Proximity to this transport infrastructure provides opportunities to connect Merrifield North to the wider Principal Freight Network.

The need to provide enhanced access between the precinct and the wider North Growth Corridor has been identified. Planned arterial roads within and surrounding the MNP include Aitken Boulevard and the Western Arterial, both generally north-south roads. Additionally, planned upgrades to Gunns Gully Road, an east-west arterial that runs through the precinct, seek to deliver a high level of accessibility to the precinct. Old Sydney Road has also received funding commitments from the Federal Government allowing for minor upgrades. Access will also need to be enhanced through improved public transport and shared pedestrian and cycling pathways.

Ideas and opportunities shared:

- Development of the precinct should only commence once access to the Hume Freeway is improved to minimise safety and access risks.
- The '1 mile grid' in the North Growth Corridor breaks down north of Epping; extending Aitken Boulevard through the precinct will provide a critically needed, second north-south transport alignment, and provide for redundancy.
- Aitken Boulevard should be centrally aligned through the precinct, passing through proposed employment land rather than near the KRB site to:
 - Maximise access to developable land
 - Provide an active frontage on at least one side of Aitken Boulevard.
 - Avoid the need for large and costly structures over the KRB.
 - Allow for the alignment to utilise the embankment of the KRB, which is currently used by Melbourne Water to access the site.
- Accommodate the stakeholder proposed Merrifield Park without major access impacts to surrounding existing and proposed urban areas, including Beveridge major town centre.
- Design Aitken Boulevard to be Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) capable.
- Construct the Gunns Gully Road Interchange (GGRI) which will provide enhanced access to Merrifield North and enable the activation of the Cloverton Metropolitan Activity Centre (MAC).
- Connection from Old Sydney Road to Gunns Gully Road.
- Concern that retaining Inverloch Wetlands may undermine the economic justification for the GGRI, increasing reliance on the Hume Freeway and worsening congestion.
- A lower-order connector road around the KRB could enable access to the KRB, and coupled with mixed use, create a softer transition between natural and urban areas.
- The pre-European Wetland extent needs to be resolved promptly to enable transport network planning to proceed.
- Consider opportunities for interim connections to the Beveridge South West precinct to leverage off Gunns Gully Road upgrade and facilitate staging of development within Beveridge South West.
- Ensure roads that cross waterways are designed sensitively to minimise impact on the natural values and not block waterways (Cloverton Boulevard Bridge has been identified as an example of poor practice in this regard).

Other considerations:

The VPA will work closely with DTP-T to determine the alignment of key arterial roads including Aitken Boulevard and the Western Arterial. Collaboration with DTP-T will also determine how the proposed transport network will best integrate with existing and proposed surrounding infrastructure. An Integrated Transport Assessment and Strategic Transport Modelling will be undertaken to inform this work.

EMERGING THEME 4

Manage **water and drainage solutions** on site efficiently while protecting the natural environment.

Some areas of Merrifield North are prone to flooding, particularly in the vicinity of Kalkallo Retarding Basin (KRB), Kalkallo Creek and a small number of unnamed waterways. Many of these areas are subject to the Floodway Overlay, Land Subject to Inundation Overlay or Urban Floodway Zone.

Development of the MNP will require high-quality drainage infrastructure to manage stormwater, improve water quality, and reduce flood risk.

Biodiversity, native vegetation, and ecological values are present within the MNP, as evidenced by the BCS areas, and will be considered and managed appropriately in terms of policy and legislation.

Ideas and opportunities shared:

- A network of conservation reserves, waterways, and public open spaces should be established throughout the precinct to provide stormwater treatment, flood management and climate mitigation opportunities.
- KRB should feature ephemeral wetlands that aim to, at least, reflect the natural values that formerly existed at Inverlochy Wetlands.
- Drainage planning should consider the sub-region holistically to ensure maximum efficiency, particularly regarding:
 - Maximising use of existing inundation areas to avoid use of otherwise developable land for drainage.
 - Climate change concerns.
 - Identifying the format and alignment of drainage crossings of the OMR.
 - Determining if KRB land could be made available for development.
 - Location of amenities within the KRB.
 - Aligning the Aitken Boulevard crossing of the KRB with the existing embankment.
- Explore Integrated Water Management opportunities in collaboration with Melbourne Water, including:
 - Harvesting stormwater.
 - Water sensitive urban design.
 - Streetscape greening opportunities from large floorplate facilities.
- The extent of Inverlochy Wetland and the KRB should be identified early in the planning process to ensure there is sufficient capacity to minimise flood risk.
- Proposals at Hazelwynde in Beveridge North West PSP may result in increased drainage capacity at the facility, requiring less KRB land being required for drainage, freeing up land for urban development.
- Excavation of the KRB should be avoided due to sodic and dispersive soils.
- Some stakeholders have undertaken their own drainage assessments for the MNP and surrounding areas, including:
 - Opportunities and constraints assessment.
 - Drainage design for the KRB.
 - Construction of outlets to Kalkallo Creek to the south of the precinct as part of development of a neighbouring precinct.

Key risks identified:

- Presence of endangered EVC's in the KRB may restrict land available for infrastructure provision.
- The road and drainage network will require iterative design, including further OMR design.
- Drainage planning for Beveridge South West will be required to inform MNP drainage planning.
- Interruption of pre-development hydrology.

Other considerations:

The Kalkallo DSS, currently under preparation by Melbourne Water, covers an area of approximately 5,000 Ha and includes most of the MNP.

Melbourne Water has indicated that completion of the DSS is contingent on resolution of the extent of Inverloch Wetlands to be retained, alignment of Aitken Boulevard and further OMR design.

Several drainage lines are planned to pass from the Beveridge South West precinct to Merrifield North. These drainage lines are currently planned to converge north of the OMR resulting in a single crossing point.

The KRB will help slow floodwaters before they re-enter Kalkallo Creek, serving as a key asset for flood control and water quality management.



View to the north to northeast
of Gunns Gully Road

EMERGING THEME 5

Establish **service network** infrastructure that is optimised and efficient.

To support the development of the precinct and maximise Net Developable Area (NDA), service infrastructure (i.e., water, sewerage, gas, and power), must be delivered as the precinct develops and consolidated along key network corridors.

The Western Outer Ring Main (WORM) gas pipeline, constructed by APA, passes through the precinct, running adjacent to Gunns Gully Road on its south side. The pipeline will affect the total NDA of the precinct as well as what type of development is permissible in proximity to the pipeline.

Yarra Valley Water has developed initial sewer, drinking water, and non-drinking water plans for the MNP. These show the Kalkallo Creek Main Sewer Asset following the Gunns Gully Road and Aitken Boulevard alignments. Drinking water and non-drinking water mains must be located adjacent to roads to enable access. Pressure-reducing stations for drinking and non-drinking water are also to be located adjacent to roads to allow for ease of access.

Service network infrastructure, including above, will be integrated with precinct planning to maximise NDA.

Ideas and opportunities shared:

- PSP planning and infrastructure design should be integrated to ensure maximum NDA and efficiency of infrastructure delivery, including:
 - Ensures service infrastructure is appropriately located and does not compromise the ability to operate the WORM, a state significant asset.
 - Design key roads to ensure potable, non-potable and sewer mains can be appropriately accommodated to reduce land take.
- Identify and co-locate pressure reducing stations for drinking and non-drinking water (approximately 60m x 30m required).

- Provide a 7-metre-wide reserve along Gunns Gully Road to allow connection to sewer mains east of the Hume Freeway. This can be used for public access e.g. bike paths.
- Sewerage and drainage infrastructure are constructed south of the KRB and were developed as part of the Merrifield West precinct.
- A sewer pipeline has been constructed as part of the Merrifield West and Merrifield Central precinct which bisects the KRB site. As floodwater should not cross this pipeline only the northern portion of the KRB can be used for retarding purposes, freeing the southern portion for urban development.
- Service infrastructure should be aligned with the KRB frontage, as opposed to Aitken Boulevard, to avoid uncertainty regarding staging.
- One stakeholder has completed work to identify opportunities to make the service infrastructure more 'logical' and consolidated.
- Potential need to relocate the WORM pipeline when development of the precinct commences to accommodate future land uses.
- Precinct development and infrastructure delivery must be coordinated through careful staging.
- Deliver infrastructure early to encourage PSP implementation.

Key risks identified:

- Early agreement on the alignment of key service infrastructure with all authorities to facilitate the delivery of these assets.
- Sensitive land uses should not be located proximate to the WORM pipeline.

Other considerations:

The VPA will undertake a Utility Servicing Assessment involving consultation with various utility providers and relevant stakeholders to understand existing services in the precinct and the types of servicing required.

Next steps

Combined Pitching Summary Session

The next step in the Merrifield North PSP process is a combined pitching feedback and visioning session where all pitching session contributors and other precinct stakeholders will be invited to attend a 2–3-hour workshop. This session will include a summary of the responses the VPA has received through the pitching activities, provide an opportunity for attendees to pose questions related to this process and the project in general, and visioning exercises. This will provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to receive insights into each other's requirements for Merrifield North.

Co-Design Session

A co-design workshop is intended for early-2026.

Technical reports

Various technical studies will be commissioned for Merrifield North. These have been separated into two categories:

- Category 1: Actioning Due Diligence Recommendations.
- Category 2: Precinct Planning

Category 1 technical reports include:

- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment (ACHIA).
- Cultural Values Assessment (CVA).

Category 2 technical reports include:

- Revised Land Capability Assessment
- Arboriculture Assessment.
- Bushfire Risk Assessment.
- Post Contact Heritage Assessment.
- Economic and Employment Needs Assessment.
- Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment.
- Integrated Water Management Assessment.
- Integrated Transport Assessment.
- Strategic Transport Modelling.
- Utility Servicing Assessment.
- Safety Management Strategy.
- Employment Land Design Guideline Assessment.

Merrifield North
Precinct Structure Plan
Pitching Session Summary Report

AUGUST 2025