



*South Gippsland
Shire Council*



VENUS BAY TOURISM PRECINCT PLAN

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Tourism Precinct Planning	16
Commercial Precinct	32
Wastewater Management	40
Objectives & Strategies	48
Consultation	51
Key Messages.....	59
Acknowledgments	83
Appendix 1	84
Appendix 2	85

Introduction

At Ordinary Council Meeting 28 February 2018, Council resolved to prepare a Venus Bay Activity Centre Plan for Venus Bay's town centre. This report and associated plan is the result of this work. As well as presenting background information and analysis, this report contains:

- Economic analysis findings
- Proposed planning scheme changes
- Final Streetscape Concept Plan for the tourism precinct
- Wastewater recommendations
- Consultation findings and effect on the project

In recognition that commercial and community services in this context provide for both residents and tourists to the area during peak holiday times, the report and associated plan is named the Venus Bay Tourism Precinct Plan (VBTPP).

The plan aims to provide guidance for development of the commercial precinct to continue to service anticipated increasing resident and visitor populations. This plan considered the policy and infrastructure needs of the tourism precinct for the next 10-20 years.

The preparation of the plan also responds to South Gippsland Planning Scheme Clause 21.15-9 that seeks to “clearly define the boundaries of commercial development, and planning controls to ensure that the design of commercial areas is consistent with preferred town character” for Venus Bay.

Operation

The VBTPP shall come into operation when Council adopts this plan. Its implementation is largely based on availability of funding and willingness of individual property owners to develop their sites as well as key transport and infrastructure triggers such as:

- Streetscape redevelopment including construction of public car parks as demand dictates
- Improvements to the paths and trails connectivity
- Changes to speed designations and signs
- Public transport improvements
- Construction of a small scale sewerage scheme

Other drivers that will support implementation of the plan include:

- Major public projects or investments
- Collaboration with other agencies
- Promotion of the VBTPP

Method

The project involved the following steps:

1. Background Review
2. Draft Streetscape Concept Design
3. Public Consultation
4. Economic & Waste Water Analysis
5. Presenting Findings

Location

Venus Bay is a small coastal township in West Gippsland, south east of Melbourne, Victoria.

It is located approximately 170 km from Melbourne CBD (2 ¼ hours), 104 km (80 mins) from Traralgon in the Latrobe Valley and 40 km (35 mins) from Leongatha.

This makes it accessible for day and overnight trips from Melbourne, the Latrobe Valley and other local areas.

It's nearest commercial centres are Tarwin Lower and Inverloch.



Background

Venus Bay was created from donated farm land and established in three parts known as the first, second and third estates. The estates are situated between the primary coastal dune system on the Bass Strait coast and the estuary landscape of Anderson Inlet. They are separated from Andersons Inlet by rural farm land and wetland/ salt marsh vegetation.

The coastal environment in Venus Bay provides a great deal of beauty for tourism and general residential amenity as well as being an important habitat for wildlife.

The natural environment is highly valued by the community and provides a landscape that is well utilised during the summer months, in particular the beach areas for water sports and fishing.

The key character elements of the town, include its landscape setting and built form, collectively creates a small coastal hamlet, which integrates with the surrounding coastal environment. (Venus Bay Urban Design Framework, 2004)

A demographic change is occurring, with permanent residents increasing substantially over the past decade (9% annual increase, compared with 3% experienced in the neighbouring town of Inverloch). As the population grows and environment changes, the services within the town and its neighbour, Tarwin Lower will need to adapt.

In recognition of anticipated continued growth, the development of a Venus Bay Activity Centre Plan was sought by Council in February 2018 to ensure the long term prosperity of the commercial precinct and support development to meet the future needs of resident and visitor population.

In 2016, a Community Budgeting Process delivered additional funding to the town for key projects chosen by the community. Two of these relate to this plan:

1. Surf Life Saving Club redevelopment
2. New skate park

As part of the process, \$150,000 was allocated for the redevelopment of the Surf Life Saving Club to support service level and improve the public toilet at Beach Number One.

The construction of a new modern entry level skate park was allocated \$125,000 to provide recreational opportunities for local youth and visitors.

Council presented a number of possible sites for the new skate park to a public meeting in August 2018. The attendees at the public meeting decided on the site within the commercial precinct on land purchased for the purposes of public car parking during peak visitor periods (North east corner of Jupiter Boulevard and Centre Road, 141-143 Jupiter Boulevard).

The skate park has emerged as quite a divisive issue within the community in terms of need as well as location. As a result, it was deemed prudent to seek comment on the skate park location within the context of the wider tourism precinct plan.

As part of this project, Council sought feedback on the [Draft Streetscape Concept Design](#) which identified the skate park at the corner site. The plan considered the need for the skate park to be easily accessible, linked to other public conveniences (toilet, retail area), similar land uses and provided with public surveillance.



Areas considered for improvement in Tourism Precinct Plan

Tourism Precinct Plan Area

The VBTPP applies to the area considered to be the commercial and tourism precinct of Venus Bay which are located on Jupiter Boulevard between Centre Road and Beach Number One on Surf Parade which continues beyond Pandora Avenue.

The area generally runs in an east-west direction. The main access to Venus Bay Beach Number One and the Surf Lifesaving Club is to the west along Jupiter Boulevard. The privately owned Caravan Park is to the north-west.

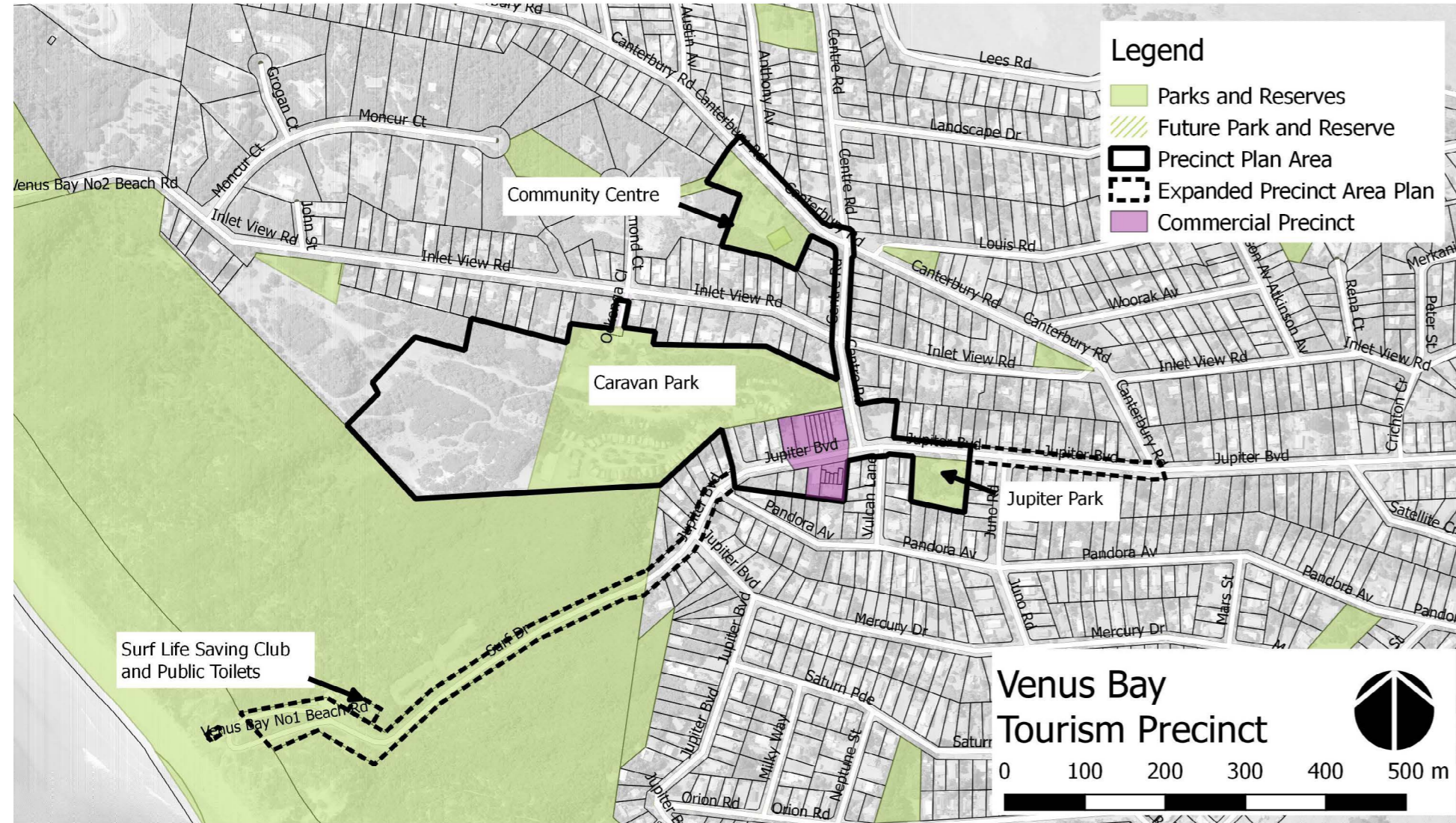
The local public toilet and children's playground is located approximately 50 metres to the east of the commercial precinct at Jupiter Boulevard Park on Jupiter Boulevard. The Community Centre is located approximately 350 metres to the north from the Jupiter Boulevard and Centre Road intersection. A second playground and public park is located adjacent to the Community Centre.

The precinct includes the existing Commercial and Township zoned land on Jupiter Boulevard between Centre Road and Pandora Avenue,



the Jupiter and Canterbury Road parks, Community Centre and the caravan park.

The area now includes Beach Number One, in response to the Surf Lifesaving Club's interest in wastewater management improvement opportunities arising from this project.



Demographics

Venus Bay is primarily a coastal holiday location which has experienced significant growth in population over the past 10 years. In the 2016 Census, Venus Bay was found to have 994 residents, an increase of about 85% since the last Census in 2006.

This has exceeded the projected population growth in the Housing and Settlement Strategy.

The numbers of young people (under 25 years old) have increased between 2006 and 2016, however the proportion of the total population has decreased from 20.9% to 15.3%.

In contrast, the over 55 age group has increased from 47% to 57% of the population. The 25-55 year old age group has remained fairly static over that time.

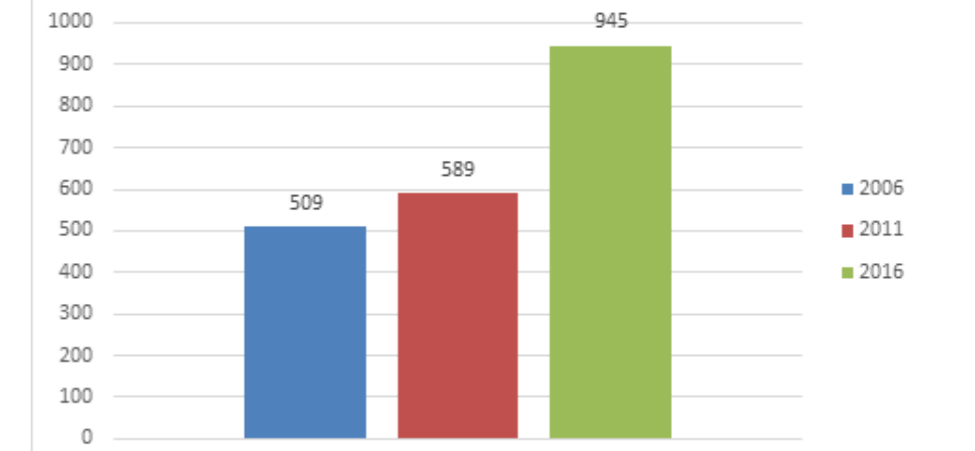
During the summer months the township swells with tourists, both seasonal and day visitors.

Increasing flexible working arrangements, improved access to and from Melbourne based work places and on-line retail opportunities, are providing new employment pathways for residents of coastal and rural settlements.

It is expected that this may influence the population movements into the area in the future.

Key Settlement	Population 2011	Population 2031
Venus Bay	589	791

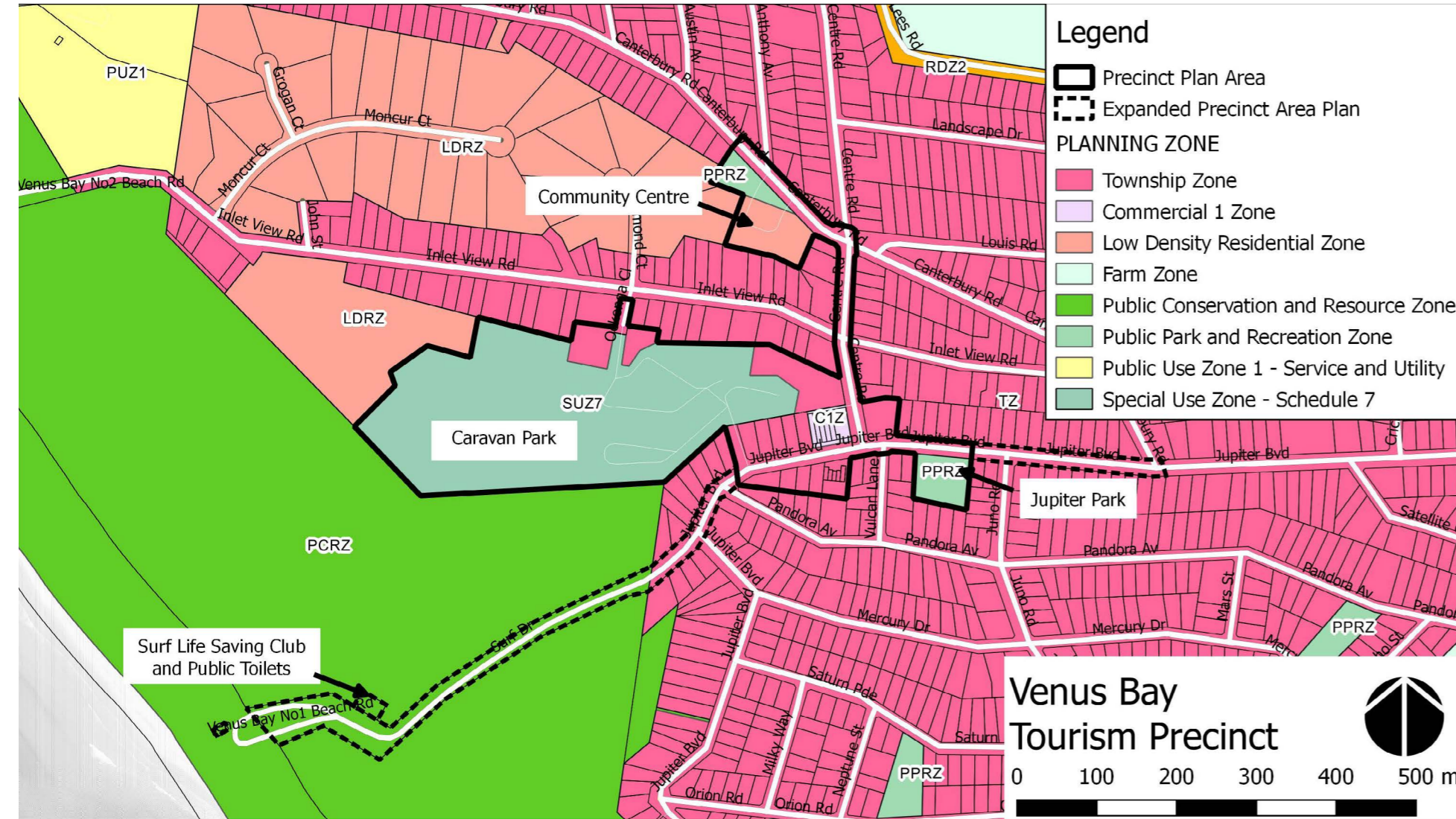
Based on Moderate Growth Scenario - i.d forecast undertaken on behalf of South Gippsland Shire Council for Housing and Settlement Strategy, 2013



Venus Bay Population, ABS Census Data, 2019

Land Use

Land use within the Tourism Precinct consist of Township Zone, Commercial Zone 1, Public Park and Recreation Zone and Public Use Zone 7 (Caravan Park).



Tourism

Venus Bay attracts many visitors from within Victoria for its quiet coastal environment, fishing and surfing. Cape Liptrap Coastal Park spans the length of the Venus Bay coastline and is a key tourism asset within the municipality.

South Gippsland tourism contributes over “\$100 million to the local economy and supplies 600 direct jobs which will increase as the sector further develops” (Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2018-20) It is estimated that our natural assets, such as the dramatic coastline of Venus Bay, attract around one million visitors annually.

The tourism market in South Gippsland is highly seasonal, leading to issues of business sustainability during the quiet months from April to November. Conversely, there is a increased need for infrastructure and environmental management during the peak season.

It is challenging to identify the value of tourism as an individual classification as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) does not classify tourism as a separate industry but as a part of many industries, for example retail.

South Gippsland rental, hiring and real estate services have a combined output of \$295 million, that is equivalent to 9% overall output within the municipality. (REMPAN Economic Modeling and Planning, December 2016). Venus Bay has two real estate agents providing both land and property sales and seasonal rentals.

South Gippsland retail trades “provides 1,048 jobs, equivalent of 9.4% overall workforce”. (REMPAN, 2016). Venus Bay has a number of retail services including miscellaneous general store, clothing and surf shop. A hairdresser operates in conjunction with the surf shop. It also is provided with a chemist which also offers a range of retail products such as hats.

South Gippsland’s accommodation and food services provide 638 jobs. This is equivalent of 5.7% overall workforce within the municipality (REMPAN, 2016). Venus Bay is serviced by two bar/ restaurants, general store, fish and chip takeaway, ice creamery and pizza / pasta takeaway. A range of accommodation options are available including a caravan park, boutique accommodation and holiday rentals. These mainly cater for the needs of tourists and incidental or lifestyle needs of residents, such as milk, bread, coffee and take away food.

Significant retail “leakage” occurs within South Gippsland to Inverloch, Wonthaggi and Leongatha as well as the Latrobe Valley, Melbourne and on-line (Spend Map, 2019). Council seeks to reduce this through supporting the local retail sector.

Council’s Economic Development and Tourism team support businesses in a number of ways. They meet with and provide advice to individual businesses upon request. They provide business improvement workshops, free monthly sessions with mentors from

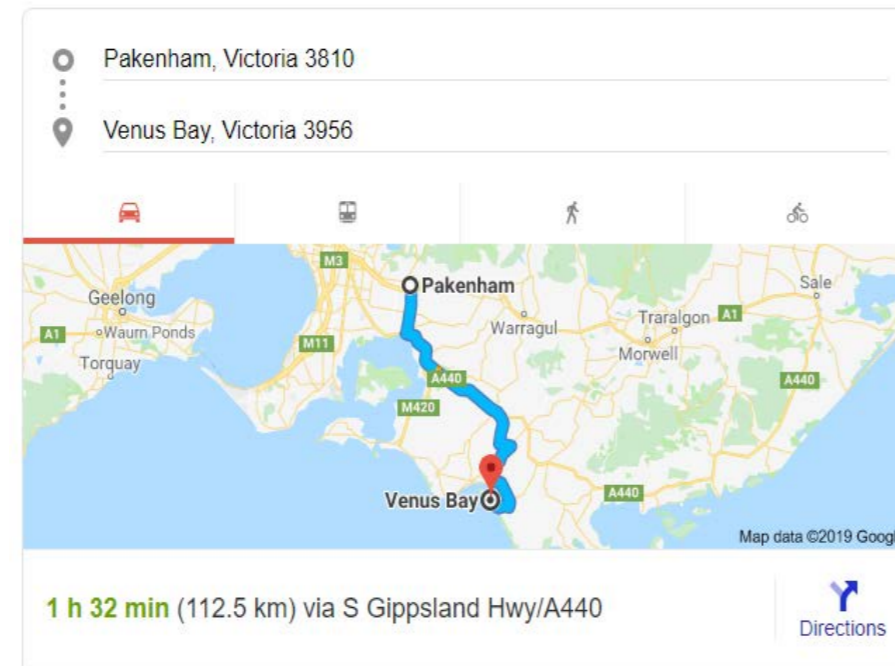
the Small Business Mentoring Service, a free business database and link to other businesses - Gippsland Business Connect, organise visits from the Victorian Government's Small Business Bus, sponsor and promote the Gippsland Business Awards, conduct the annual Small Business Festival, provide a monthly business e-newsletter.

Development of nature based, cultural, and food and beverage experiences within Venus Bay and South Gippsland more generally has significant scope.

The rugged coastline and estuary inlet of Venus Bay offers a greater number of nature based experiences, supported by vibrant food and beverage services. It has potential to offer cultural experiences for residents and visitors through arts, crafts and indigenous history installations and activities. These types of activities are considered to be of particular importance in realising higher visitation during the colder months and have community support.

As Melbourne's population grows closer to the municipality, accessibility to Venus Bay is improving, resulting in the potential for greater visitation, in the future, particularly day visitation. Such an increase will place greater pressure on the town's services and infrastructure to maintain suitable levels of amenity for both visitors and residents.

Tourism is also a vital contributor in resident attraction as many people often take a 'try before you buy' approach before making a permanent move to the region after holidaying in coastal towns such as Venus Bay, Walkerville, Sandy Point or Waratah Bay (EDTS 2018-20).



Distance and time from South East Melbourne, Google, 2019

Opportunities for Improvements

This project involved reviewing existing reports, plans, consultation feedback received and customer requests and complaints to establish the main issues and values expressed by the community.

Council's Community Infrastructure Plan (2014) identified that connecting existing infrastructure and access to facilities is a high priority.

These existing matters along with those that emerged during the project were explored and used to develop concept plans and recommendations. These issues and suggestions were reviewed and tested by technical experts in the drafting and the preparation of the final recommendations, specifically the Streetscape Concept Plan.



The community continues to value and seek improvements in the following areas:

- Aquatic activities – opportunities and infrastructure for aquatic activities
- Open spaces – preservation of open spaces for flora and fauna as well as active recreation in appropriate locations
- Providing for youth needs
- Accessibility of medical services for aging population
- Reducing litter
- Adequate parking
- Linked shared pathways
- Clear signs for visitors - directing pedestrians and cars to community centre from shops
- Streetscaping of commercial area, including shade trees and safe pedestrian access
- Character of a "small hamlet, which integrates with the surrounding coastal environment" maintained in commercial precinct

These areas for consideration come with some challenges that this plan aims to address. These include:

- Concerns regarding adequate stock of car parking in the town centre during summer to provide for parking (this challenge is exacerbated due to lack of walking, cycling and public transport services).
- Adverse visitor impacts such as overuse of toilets.
- Poor pedestrian network that does not provide a sufficiently safe link between the two sides of Jupiter Boulevard retail strip and access to Beach Number One.
- Pedestrian risk from informalised and poorly marked footpath in front of 112 (Fish and Chips, Icecreamery) and 114-116 Jupiter Boulevard (Cavity Bar, PBE Real Estate & Maxines clothing store).
- Lack of wastewater disposal capacity for existing or expanded retail uses within property boundaries.
- Agreement on new safer and accessible skate park location that is linked to other public conveniences (toilet, retail area), similar land uses and is secured through adequate public surveillance.
- Identified future character for the commercial area that is sensitive to the coastal setting.
- Consensus on what services should be available in Venus Bay compared with Tarwin Lower for future mostly aging population and visitor increases.
- Provision of services and infrastructure for an aging population and increasing visitor numbers.
- Safer pedestrian and cycling links between residential areas of Estate 1 & 2 and the commercial precinct.. In particular, link existing shared path to on-road pedestrian/cycle lanes at Venus Bay shops.
- Power poles in middle of streetscape and car parking.

Objectives

The Venus Bay Tourism Precinct is a prosperous neighbourhood activity centre primarily focused on local and tourism services.

A safe and usable tourism precinct that is high quality, comfortable, safe, accessible, pedestrian-focused and inviting to visitors.

A coastal hamlet in which the buildings and infrastructure sensitively integrates with the surrounding coastal environment.

Principles of resource conservation are used to support environmental values.

Tourism Precinct Planning

A number of changes are recommended to improve the commercial activity and public surveillance of the town centre. These include changing the planning zones to secure land for commercial activity and applying design controls (using the Design and Development Overlay) to guide building design that maintains the valued character of the area.

Tourism Precinct Streetscape Concept Plan Design



Venus Bay Tourism Precinct Plan seeks to promote tourism, a key service and economic driver in the town. The town experiences large seasonal increases in people, bicycles, cars and waste that require careful management and maintenance.

In 2018, Council committed to renew infrastructure "to attract new business and improve the quality of life for residents" (EDTS 2018-20)

Streetscape upgrades are considered necessary to deliver improvements to pedestrian and traffic management, parking, and tourism facilities of the area that address current issues set out at page 13.

The [Draft Streetscape Concept Plan](#), prepared for community consultation, identified improvements to address issues of pedestrian safety, car parking arrangement/location/amount, traffic calming and connection with existing community and visitor facilities.

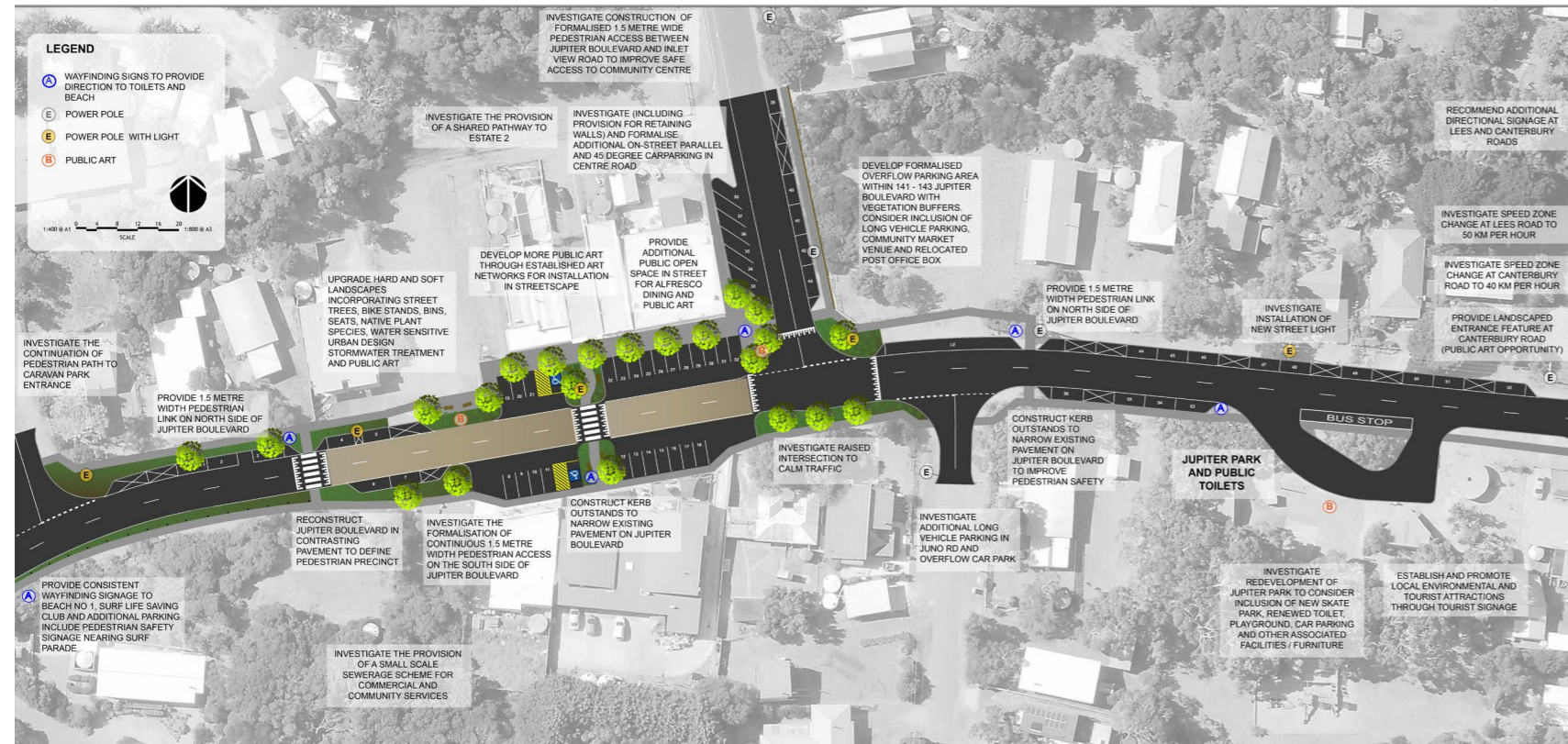
In response to community comment and additional technical investigation, the Streetscape Concept Plan was updated and renamed the Tourism Precinct Streetscape Plan, refer to **Appendix 1**.

The plan aims to better manage summer peak loads by directing residents and visitors away from car-based travel and inappropriate / unsafe traffic behaviour to more orderly pedestrian and bicycle travel.

The main components of the streetscape include:

- Additional shaded and landscaped public open spaces.
- Safe locations for north-south crossing of Jupiter Boulevard.
- Safe pedestrian pathways along Jupiter Boulevard and Centre Road to link key places of interest such as Jupiter Boulevard Park, Shops, Caravan Park, Community Centre and Beach Number One.

- Increased car parking within close proximity to the commercial centre.
- Vehicle calming measures to improve pedestrian safety.
- Improved cycling access and facilities in commercial centre.
- New skate park well serviced with facilities and necessary public surveillance.



Tourism Precinct Streetscape Concept Plan

Transport

Most visitors and residents travel to and from Venus Bay by car. There is no regional public transport service provided to the township. The nearest V-Line bus service stop is at Inverloch (28 km) with the next nearest bus stops being in Meeniyan (30 km), Fish Creek (32 km) and Leongatha (40 km).

There is modest access to alternative transport modes, these primarily being walking and cycling and some seasonal community-led group transport options provided by the Venus Bay Community Centre (VBCC) and Venus Bay Men's Shed.

The VBCC recently conducted a short-term local trial using the community bus via a 'hail and ride' system. This was provided during the holiday period to improve access to sustainable transportation and reduce car parking concerns at Beach Number One and the commercial shopping precinct.

The VBCC reported that the service was well used in the 2018/19 summer season and hopes to continue and expand this service where funding permits.

The Venus Bay Men's Shed provides a community bus service to allow residents to do shopping trips (mostly to Wonthaggi) and other group activities. To use the service, residents join the Men's Shed and pay an annual fee.

A bus stop is located at Jupiter Boulevard Park which provides for school bus service and is available for other community transport

services to use. This is considered the most appropriate location as it is outside the busy centre but within an easy 50 metre walk along an established pathway.

Walking and bicycle access could be improved through defined pathways separated from traffic, particularly between Estates 1 and 2. This would provide a mostly flat 13 minute cycle or 50 minute walk to the commercial precinct. This is important for Estate 2 as no commercial services exist there.



Venus Bay Shuttle Bus Poster, 2018

Traffic Management

Jupiter Boulevard commercial precinct is located either side of a “two way road with a 6.3 metre wide carriageway set within a 2 metre wide road reserve (approx.). Formal kerbside parking (90 degree angle) is provided within the precinct, with informal kerbside parking located intermittently between Surf Drive and Lees Road.” (Venus Bay CBD Traffic Study, 2009).

The number of vehicles traveling to and from Venus Bay (Jupiter Boulevard near Lees Road) is substantially different between summer (particularly January) and winter months.

Summer traffic is approximately twice that of winter. “Jupiter Boulevard carries some 1900 vehicles per day during the peak (summer) months and some 900 vehicles per day during the non-peak (winter) months” (VBCBDTS, 2009).

Since 2008, the number of vehicles traveling has almost doubled. On average, 3253 cars now enter the township each day in summer (measured on Jupiter Boulevard 250 metres from Lees Road). A number of these turn at Lees Road (522 / day), and a further 844 cars per day turn at Canterbury Road. (SGSC, Unpublished Traffic Count Data, January 2018)

The vast majority of cars continue to travel into the commercial precinct and on to Beach Number One.

Over the ten year period between 2006 and 2016, the population has increased by 85% (Census data).

Summer traffic counts into Venus Bay have closely followed this increase, being 71% over the same period. This suggests that the traffic increases are primarily related to the resident population increase rather than a significant increase in visitor numbers.

A contributing factor for increase traffic into the precinct may be that directional signs are insufficient. Encouraging the diversion of traffic traveling to Estates 2 and 3 before reaching the town is recommended. This may be achieved through appropriate directional signs, via either Lees or Canterbury Roads and is a matter recommended for further investigation in consultation with Vic Roads.



Car Parking

Car (vehicle) travel is the main mode of travel to move in, out and around Venus Bay due to the lack of alternatives, such as public transport, as well as the distance from which people travel to the area. As such, vehicle parking is required within the shopping precinct.

Parking within easy walking distance of shops (within a couple of blocks) is desirable within the tourism precinct to provide for aged residents and families. A range of parking types are needed for the area that includes:

Staff – long stay – parking usually on street or less convenient spots. Typical staff numbers peak during the summer are estimated to be approximately 40 during the busiest hours.

Customer – short / medium-term stay – typically less than hour stay – multi-purpose trips such as general store, chemist, café, tourist visitation. Estimate that these trips are 80% of trips.

Customer – very short / short-stay – typically 10-20 minute stay to pick up script from chemist, mail from mail box or takeaway coffee or food. These can be accommodated within the future public car park.

The areas that are within easy walking distance of the post office box (North-West Corner of Centre Rd) include Inlet View Road, Vulcan Lane and Pandora Ave. Inlet View Road to the east of Centre Road and Pandora Ave (which is also a No Through Road are unpaved and not able to include formalised parking).

Vulcan Lane has some capability to provide space for informal parking and is an area that has areas of sufficient length capable of being used for long parking.

An engineer’s survey of the area identified 37 formalised car parking spaces along the existing streetscape between Pandora Avenue (closed road) to Vulcan Lane and up Centre Road. These are a combination of formal kerbside parking (90 degree marked parking), informal parallel parking and some 60 degree parking on Centre Road.

A number of the commercial premises have off-street parking defined for staff parking, but many have been eroded with property development over time or businesses have exceeded expected staff numbers as the area gets busy. In some cases, parking space



Speed Limits

Speed at which cars travel is an important factor in maintaining pedestrian safety in high use areas. The commercial area on Jupiter Boulevard is currently zoned for a maximum 50 km / hour. This is higher than the typical 40 km / hour applied in areas of high pedestrian use.

The Jupiter Boulevard Park is considered an area in which pedestrian safety requires greater attention, with children being a significant user of the park and at more risk from cars. Entrance features recommended at the intersection of Jupiter Boulevard with Canterbury Road, provide an opportunity to include a speed change to commence traffic calming measures before Jupiter Boulevard Park.



requirements have been waived by past planning permits because spaces could not be accommodated on site.

In developing the Streetscape Concept Plan, an additional eight formalised car parking spaces (excluding the new car park on corner of Centre Road and Jupiter Boulevard) are proposed, with some informal parking spaces being renewed as landscaped public open space. The proposed Public Car Park within 141-143 Jupiter Boulevard (corner of Centre Road) is estimated to yield about 50 car spaces (pending detailed design).

Accessible parking spaces have been identified on each side of the street, providing safer access to the chemist to and from the pedestrian cross over. An additional parking space will be considered for the Centre Road corner car park and a space will be provided for at Jupiter Boulevard Park.

It is anticipated that upon the implementation of the Streetscape Concept Plan (funding availability dependent) a total of 95 public car spaces will be provided within the tourism precinct.

In practice, additional parking demands would be met by a combination of on and off street parking, depending upon customer choice and availability.

Long Car Parking

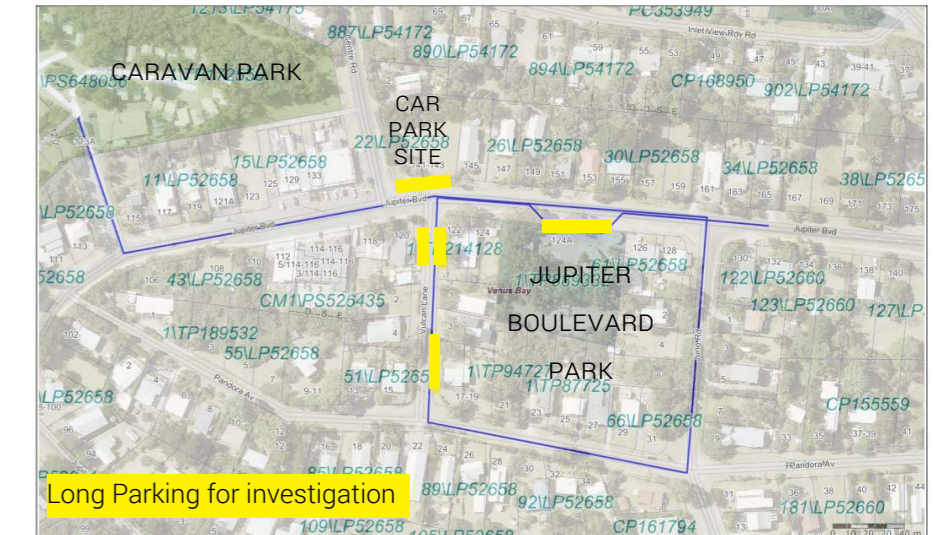
The Tourism Recreational Vehicle Strategy (SGSC, 2014) identifies Venus Bay as a caravan friendly town that provides access to a sewerage dump point (fee for service at Venus Bay Caravan Park). It responds to an economic environment where the Recreational Vehicle (RV), caravan and camping market is growing. This growth is seen especially in the growing retired “baby boomer” / self-superannuated RV users.

Council seeks to find ways that South Gippsland Shire can encourage and manage visitation of RV owners “by increasing local infrastructure including developing additional signs, long vehicle parking and more options for free / low cost overnight stays” (TRVS, 2014). The Streetscape Concept Plan has considered the needs of recreational vehicles to provide for ease of passage into and out of the town and caravan park.

The length of stay and local spend by RV owners in the town could be improved through the provision of long parking bays. These areas are significantly longer than a regular bay and allow for parking of RVs as well as caravans, boats and other similar length vehicles.

In Venus Bay, long vehicle parking bays are also used regularly by local trades people throughout the year.

While there is some scope for long parking to be available within the adjacent streets of Juno Rd and Vulcan Lane (see map below), these should be considered in combination with the detailed planning of the proposed Public Car Park (corner Jupiter Boulevard and Centre Road) and the redevelopment of the Jupiter Boulevard Park.



Entrance Features

Entrance features create a sense of arrival for a town. They provide the opportunity to showcase the local town character, vegetation, and public art for the benefit of visitors to the area.

When teamed with appropriate speed zones, they support a space that is more pedestrian friendly. This is achieved through visual signals to motorists, advising them that they are entering a space within which they need to slow down.

Entrance features are recommended to be installed at the intersection of Jupiter Boulevard and Canterbury Road.

This location can support traffic calming when teamed with a change in speed and audible pavement (the latter is subject to cost investigation at the detailed design stage).

The feature will consider the existing pathway on the south side of Jupiter Boulevard and be located at a sufficient distance from pedestrian crossings near Jupiter Boulevard Park to maximise motorist visibility of pedestrians.

Aesthetically pleasing and balanced entrance features would benefit from public art to compliment low to medium height vegetation, (less than 2.7 metres, necessary to avoid power line on northern side).



Public Art

The inclusion of public art in public spaces remains a persistently expressed desire of the Venus Bay community.

In the development of the Streetscape Concept Plan, spaces for public art were earmarked as a matter of importance. This was to meet the community need for artistic expression and also to support an interesting experience for the visitor population.

During consultation with the community, a representation of a Pelican was utilised as a place holder for public art. The pelican representation created much discussion and comment on, other than a pelican, what would be representative of the township.

A number of alternatives were suggested for key entrance features, public open spaces and street furniture by the community.

Some local fauna was suggested, including the Yellow tailed black cockatoo, Wombat, Rosella, Giant banksia flower, Plovers.

A somewhat more contentious suggestion was the development of a giant pipi, like the big prawn, installed with education materials for visitors.

Bollards provided along Jupiter Boulevard were considered an opportunity for public art, with the suggestion that they be painted as local characters/identities, similar to those seen in the Geelong area.

Suitable locations early in the detailed design of streetscape and public park improvements will be identified to best facilitate the orderly development of public art pieces within the town. These will be considered with the acknowledgment that they need to reflect community and environmental values.



Rubbish

Rubbish bins are provided and emptied within the commercial precinct at sufficient numbers and frequency by Council contractors. The detailed design of the streetscape will allow Council and the community to consider preferred bin enclosure style and location.

Rubbish and litter remains a community concern, in particular at Beach Number One and other Beach Access points. Council's contractors service the public rubbish bin at Beach Number One for Parks Victoria. These bins will continue to be monitored to ensure they are sufficient for litter volumes created.

Other Beach Access points do not have public bins and are the responsibility of Parks Victoria.



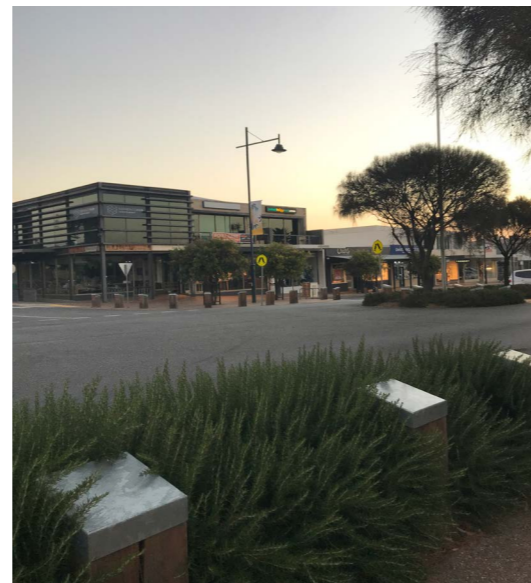
Example of bin enclosure, Leongatha, Victoria, 2019

Landscaping

Active and engaging streetscapes provide a sense of place (feeling of where you are) and positively support commercial and community activities. Within Venus Bay, the reflection of the local environment in hard and soft landscapes is preferred.

Hard landscapes will include accessible pathways and street furniture (seats, litter bins and bicycle racks). These will invite people to cycle or walk to the space, to then sit, socialise, linger and positively engage with the space and local businesses.

Soft landscapes will include indigenous plants in garden beds that can include public art and shady street trees to provide for enjoyable resting places in hot months.



Example of coastal sensitive town streetscape, Sorrento, Victoria, 2019

Hard Surfaces

Hard surfaces are planned within or adjacent to landscaped areas to allow for bike stands, seating and accessible pathways.

These surfaces, where possible, will incorporate Water Sensitive Urban Design, which allows rainfall to be directed to vegetated garden beds to reduce the need for supplementary watering.

The detailed design of the streetscape will provide opportunity for Council and the community to develop a hard landscape design that is accessible and complements the towns natural landscape character.



Current hard surfaces. Venus Bay, Victoria, 2019



Example of hard and soft landscapes. Sorrento, Victoria, 2019



Example of town landscaping with native plants. Leongatha, Victoria, 2019

Vegetation

Over thousands of years indigenous plants (native to the area) have adapted to the local environment (soil types, nutrient levels and climate). This means they require less water, little if any fertiliser, are salt tolerant in coastal areas, are cheaper to buy and are less work to grow than exotic plants.

Indigenous plants come in a wide range of colours and sizes that are attractive to people and native wildlife alike. These make them an attractive and cost effective choice for street landscaping.

South Gippsland contains a diverse range of indigenous plants, which provide critical habitat for the regions' wildlife including Wedge-tailed Eagles, Koalas and Goannas to name just a few. Less than 15 per cent of the original indigenous vegetation remains within South Gippsland, cleared primarily for farming. This places great importance on remaining patches located on public and private land.

Venus Bay sits within the Coastal Ecological Vegetation group that includes a number of vulnerable or depleted vegetation classes, Coast Banksia Woodland (EVC 2) and Coastal Headland Scrub (EVC 161) within the Gippsland Plains Bioregion.

Planting of native species in public spaces within Venus Bay will respond to expressed community aspirations and require less maintenance. Public indigenous planting provide an opportunity to plant new areas with plant groups and engage with the community. In addition, they are an opportunity to inform visitors about the native plants of the coastal environment in combination with suitably placed information signs.



Example of native vegetation landscaping. Leongatha, Victoria, 2019

Detailed designs of the streetscape will develop a Landscape Plan that will include a range of indigenous plants and seek to “enhance the characteristics of the streetscape which contribute to the character already in place” (Urban Tree Management Guidelines, SGSC, 2011)

Accent plantings to provide colour within the streetscape could include the Common Correa (*Correa reflexa*), Karkalla or Pigface (*Carpobrotus rossii*), Button Everlasting (*Helichrysum scorpioides*) and White Correa (*Correa alba*) maintaining interest year round with a long flowering season,

Purposefully placed shady street trees adjacent to public seating would provide cool resting places in hotter months.

Mass planting of feathery grasses, sedges and rushes such as Wattle Mat-rush (*Lomandra filiformis*) would provide habitat and textural interest, while Cushion Bush (*Leucophyta brownii*) provides robust structural accents in landscaped areas.

An important tree species within this vegetation landscape is the



Coastal Banksia (*banksia integrifolia*). It provides both food and habitat for local birds and animals, with attractive flowers in winter and interesting seed pods. Being a tall tree (>10 m), this species is one that stands out amongst the coastal scrub mosaic of the area when of a mature age.

Planting of Coast Banksias at key locations within the precinct that are not affected by height restrictions from power lines is preferred.



Open Spaces & Recreation

While wider issues of Open Spaces and connectivity to residential areas is a matter that is being considered as part of an update to the Open Space Strategy due for completion in 2020, open spaces within the study area have been considered within this project context.

Of particular importance, is the location of a new entry level skate park. A new skate park was chosen as a priority project for Venus Bay during the Community Budgeting Process (Community Capital Works Allocation Project) in 2016 to provide additional active recreation for local and visiting youth.

After a technical site assessment and community consultation, the corner of Centre Rd and Jupiter Bvd was considered the preferred site. This location was reviewed in the context of the wider Tourism Precinct.



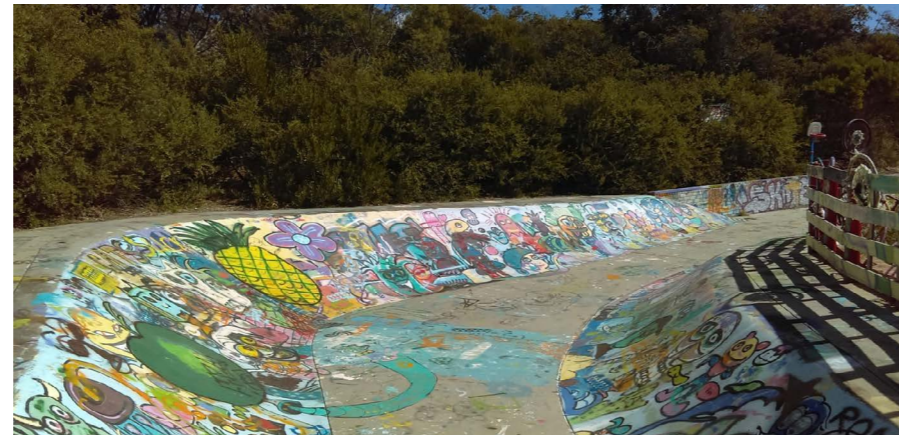
New Skate Park Draft Concept Plan for 141 Jupiter Blvd (En:Locus, 2018)

Best practice standards for the siting of Skate Parks recommend that they be sited in busy areas, in full sight, an area with access to facilities such as rubbish bins, shade, seating and toilets.

It is also recommended that they are located in an area that has good public surveillance to reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour and vandalism (Geason S & Wilson P., 1989).

Considering these standards and further comment from the community that car parking is important to retain on the site, an alternative location for the skate park was sought and identified.

The siting of the new skate park within the Jupiter Boulevard Park is considered a "good fit" but will require some redevelopment/renewal planning to coordinate the renewal of existing public facilities, playground and siting of new infrastructure, such as the skate park.



Existing Skate Park at Community Centre, Venus Bay, 2018

Commercial Precinct

A number of changes are recommended to improve the commercial activity and public surveillance of the town centre. These include changes to planning zones to secure land for commercial activities and specific design and development overlay to direct the design of developments and maintain the valued character and environment dominated space of the area.

Commercial Expansion and Design

In providing “a sufficient supply of suitably zoned land for commercial, industrial, agricultural, tourism and residential purposes with an efficient and integrated approvals and regulatory approach to ensure a positive experience for investors”. (EDTS 2018-2020) Council seeks to provide for the community’s future needs.

The Tourist Precinct of Venus Bay consists of two strips of commercial use land along Jupiter Boulevard between Vulcan Lane and Pandora Avenue. Most commercial land use occurs on land zoned as Township Zone, while approximately 2245 m² of land is zoned as Commercial 1 Zone.

The Township Zone provides flexibility in the use of the land, for residential and some commercial activities, that is often desired in a low development environment.

However, in an environment of increased permanent population and continued growth in tourist visitation its is likely that a Commercial 1 Zone for a wider area will be beneficial long term.

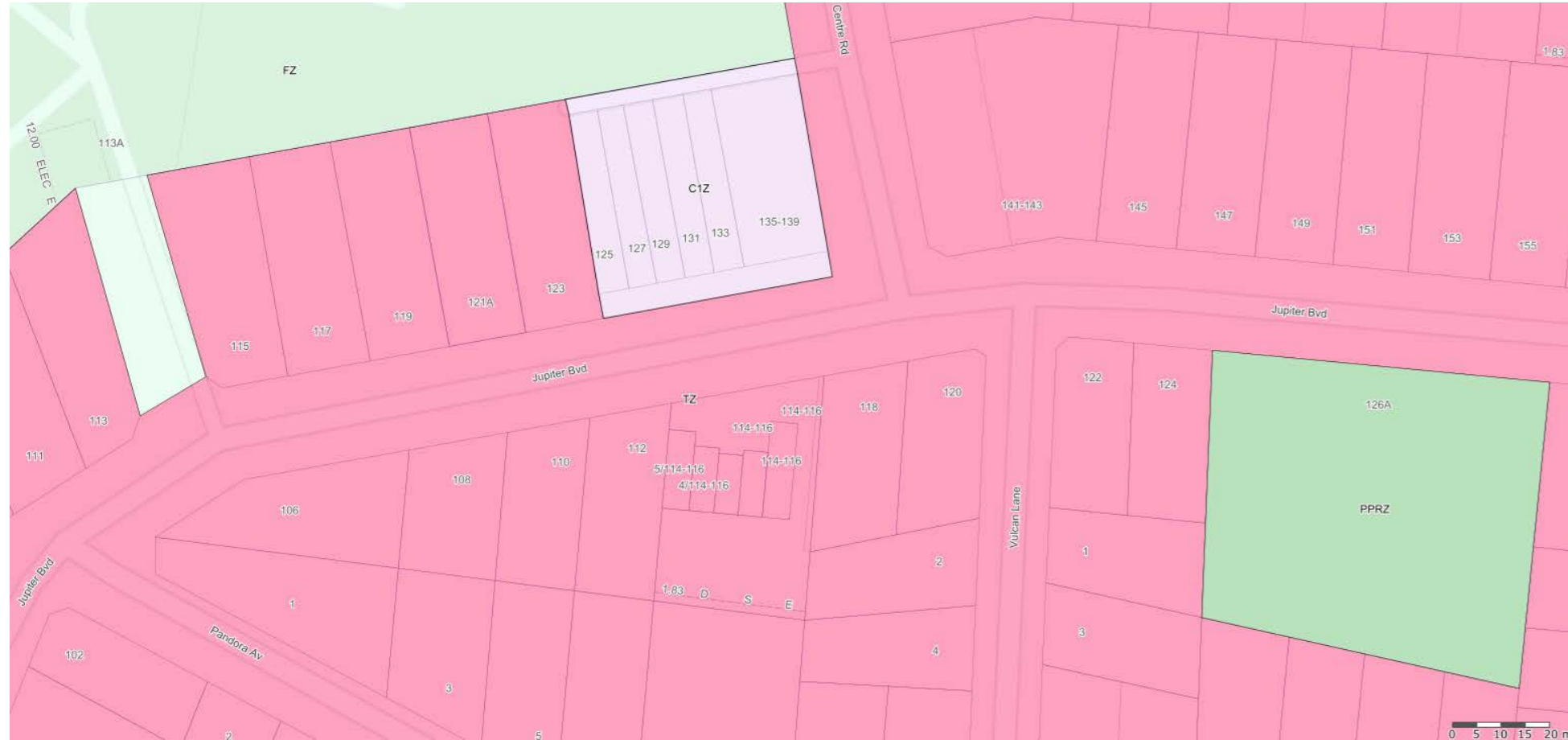
A commissioned Commercial Assessment (VBCA), refer to Appendix 2, by a specialist external consultant, Tim Nott, determined a modest amount of additional commercial land will be needed to accommodate the retail floor area (within buildings) necessary for future commercial demand.

It used established demographic data and forecasting, (Forecast .id, 2019) to develop population growth scenarios for the township.

In seeking to protect the low profile coastal character and maintenance of existing vegetation canopy, a Design and Development Overlay (DDO) Schedule 5 is applied to the township zone of Venus Bay, which includes shops within the Township Zone.

To do this, it encourages single storey buildings (recessive if second storey), places importance on maintaining the existing vegetation canopy as the maximum height within the wider landscape and maximise landscaped garden areas (>40%). Permits are triggered based on building height, set at 6.5 m from natural ground, as well as those that build closer to the front boundary. These controls are generally more relevant for residential types of developments.

In the commercial / tourism precinct a new DDO, that is specific to the commercial needs would be useful to support commercial development that is consistent with the towns character in combination with a zone change to Commercial 1. This would seek to ensure that the shop fronts are maintained as functional commercial spaces (minimum 80% window frontage), footpath weather protection is provided (important for an area that receives significant rainfall) and that private public space is maximised to ensure that in addition to the road reserve, public space is inviting and plentiful for tourism activity and benefit.



Commercial Land Use Zoned Land

Demographic Changes

The Commercial Assessment found that while we experienced a high level of development in 2012 (see graph below), this is not considered “business and usual” with occupancy permits slowing since.

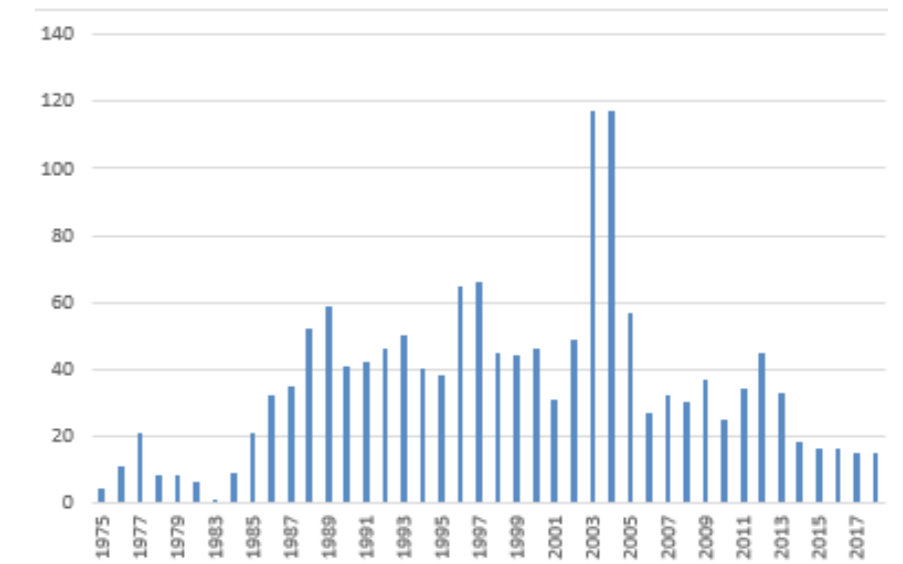
This in contrast with the population change experienced in recent years, which has seen the population grown on average “at around 3% per year, compared with growth in the municipality as a whole of 0.5% per year” (Tim Nott, 2019).

To explore the future commercial needs for the town, two future scenarios for population growth to 2036 were developed and considered within the assessment. Venus Bay is within a demographic statistical area that also includes inland townships, such as Fish Creek.

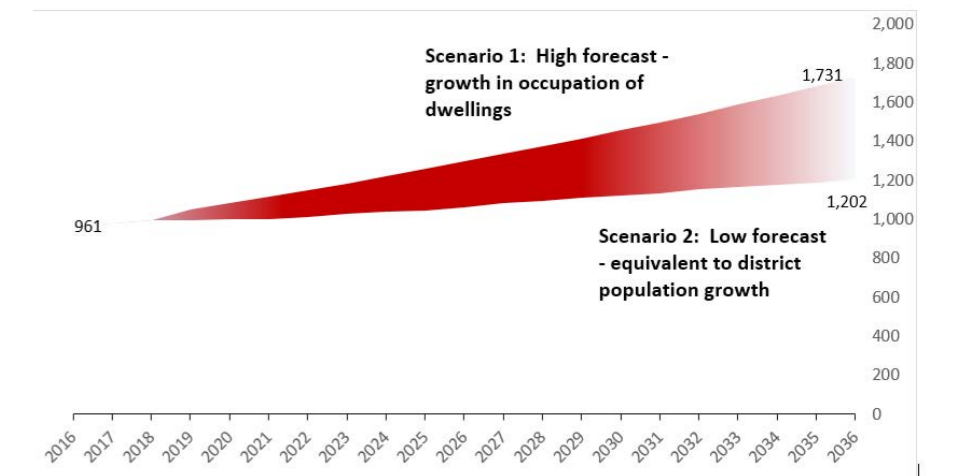
Scenario 1 would see a steadily increasing share of houses in Venus Bay occupied by residents rather than be holiday homes with an increase of 770 residents by 2036.

Scenario 2 would see Venus Bay accommodate all the growth for the South West Coastal District (based on forecast by .id consulting) with an increase 241 residents by 2036.

Both scenarios anticipate growth that will represent most of the anticipated population growth over the whole statistical area.



Number of dwelling occupancy certificates by year, Venus Bay, 1975 to 2018 (Source: unpublished Council records, 2019)



Population scenarios, Venus Bay, 2016 to 2036, Tim Nott, 2019

Commercial Expansion

The Commercial Assessment confirmed Council's adopted policy that Venus Bay is a local centre, with commercial growth being directed towards food and tourism based retail services.

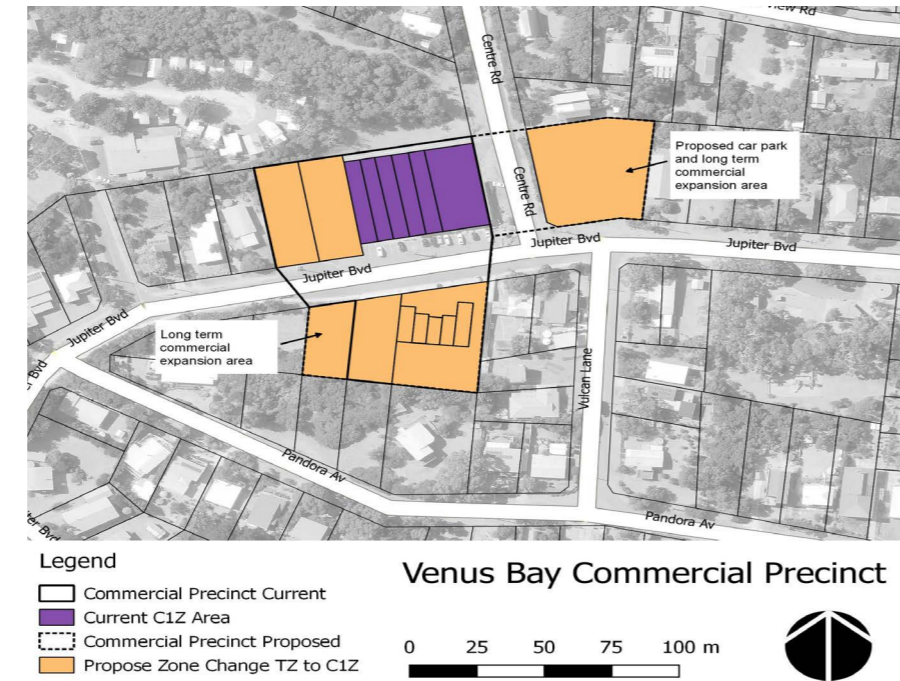
Residents will continue to look to Tarwin Lower "for immediate access to education, retail and a limited range of commercial land uses". (South Gippsland Housing and Settlement Strategy, 2013)

Some allowance for further demand for non-retail activity at the Jupiter Boulevard centre has been accommodated for in the assessment recommendations, but this demand is likely to be limited.

The Commercial Assessment recommends a range of additional retail floor space being, for Scenario 1 an additional 610 m² and Scenario 2 an additional 460 m². For planning purposes, a total land "allowance of 1800 m² for commercial buildings and associated car parking" is recommended as prudent policy.

The property layout of the commercial centre was assessed to determine how this increase can be best accommodated while maintaining a "focus [of] commercial use and development [in] a central precinct" (SGSC PS, CI 21.15-9) that is compact and accessible.

As a result, "in order to ensure ease of development, and to prevent land in the centre from being occupied by dwellings, it would be prudent to expand the Commercial 1 Zone to cover all the existing commercial activity and the intervening vacant land as well as vacant land at 141-143 Jupiter Boulevard and 110 Jupiter Boulevard." (Tim Nott, 2019).



Residential Development within Commercial Precinct

Residential uses within commercial precincts are useful to improve public surveillance of an area, reduce incidence of anti-social behaviours and create a more active lively space. They also improve diversity of housing options for the property owner and visitor market.

Considering the established town's character and environmental values, the northern side of the commercial precinct has the greatest opportunity to support residential development. This is due to its location at the base of a dune providing a backdrop of significant height, allowing second storey development to maintain a low profile within a dominant coastal scrub vegetation.

The implementation of a new Design and Development Overlay is considered prudent, to maintain respect of local character, environment and that the built form is of the highest quality to protect tourism values.

Such an overlay would seek to encourage new developments to use "external materials, colours and finishes that are of low reflective, subdued tones" and that allows the built form to be "nestled" or "absorbed in the landscape".

It would seek positive interfaces between commercial and residential

properties, encouraging second storey private open space design that maximise landscaping contributing to dominance of natural vegetation, for example as green roofing and native landscaping.

In developing residential properties within a the commercial precinct, the primary constraint is the lack of land available for adequate wastewater management. The implementation of a small scale sewerage scheme may remove this barrier and allow provision for some residential development in the future.

Planning Scheme Response

The land zone provides clear direction on what type of development Council deems appropriate in a particular area to ensure orderly development over time and provide for future needs.

The [Venus Bay Urban Design Framework](#) (VBUDF, 2014)) identified that smaller blocks to the south of Jupiter Boulevard should be secured for commercial expansion.

“ It is considered that the existing Business 1 Zone in Estate 1 is appropriate, however it should also be extended south of Jupiter Boulevard to capture the remaining smaller allotments within the township zone. By reinforcing the role of the commercial precinct through rezoning of this land any further threats of ad hoc commercial development within the township zone will be avoided.” (VBUDF, 2004)

The implementation of the VBUDF included a number of lots for commercial expansion within the Township Zone as part of the Planning Scheme’s Framework Plan for Venus Bay (CI 21.15-9).

To date, these lots continue to remain within the Township Zone. A number of adjacent lots have since been developed for housing or have current planning permits in place.

The Commercial Assessment (Tim Nott, 2019) reviewed the established commercial expansion areas to respond to these changes.

It confirmed existing Council policy, recommending the rezoning of land, with an adjustment to the location of land to be rezoned to provide for the retail floor space and car parking required for future population growth.

As a result, the remaining undeveloped lots on both sides of Jupiter Boulevard and within the boundaries of existing commercial precinct, should be considered for rezoning to ensure sufficient commercial land stock out to 2036.

It is recommended that Council to proceed with an Amendment to rezone land within the identified boundary as soon as possible. This is to ensure that in the intervening years, land is not developed for dwellings only that would result in commercial land supply being reduced.

Wastewater Management

“Advocacy and provision of modern infrastructure which supports business development including water, telecommunications, energy and waste, using innovative systems that meet community needs”.

(SGSC, Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2018-20)

Background

The implementation of a community scale sewerage scheme for Venus Bay has been considered to be important for many years due to the aging existing septic tank systems likely causing contamination of the unconfined groundwater aquifer (fed by rainwater and connected to Anderson Inlet salt water).

Insufficient support from the community, has in part, historically prevented progress of a sewerage scheme for the township. The natural environmental constraints surrounding the town (coastal dunes, acid-sulphate soils on inlet and land subject to inundation) has meant that the case for a sewerage treatment facility has not been financially achievable to date.

Wastewater management issues in Venus Bay also affect commercial properties, as they often create a significant amount of wastewater through their processes, such as dish-washing and cleaning.

While technology for the on-site treatment of wastewater has made some progress in recent years, the commercial activities in the town centre are currently still very much constrained by the lack of land area for the disposal of even the highest treated wastewater in accordance with Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPAV) Code of Practice - On-site Wastewater Management (Publication 891.4, 1 Jul 2016)

Community services such as Beach Number One toilets (Parks Victoria), the Surf Lifesaving Club and Jupiter Boulevard Park Public toilets (Council) would also benefit from improved wastewater management. Particularly during the high season summer months.

To achieve any additional commercial activity for Venus Bay, additional wastewater treatment and dispersal are required beyond the area currently available.

A small scale community reticulated (piped) wastewater treatment system is an opportunity to provide for additional commercial services within the existing precinct. The provision of an off-site wastewater treatment system would allow the area currently used for effluent dispersal to be returned to the property for other uses such as commercial / residential expansion

The area considered for the development of a small scale reticulated sewerage system includes the existing commercial area and additional growth for the future as recommended.

Design Flow Rates

The existing businesses are currently treating and dispersing wastewater within their property boundaries. Some of the systems servicing these businesses are at already at capacity which poses a risk to the environment. It also restricts expansion of business services, particularly those that use significant amounts of water for cleaning, for example, tavern / restaurants or charcoal chicken takeaway shop.

An assessment of the current and anticipated future wastewater generation provides the basis for the future development of a technical study for a small scale common effluent treatment system or community sewerage scheme.

Technical knowledge from Council's Wastewater Management Officer, Environmental Health Officer and South Gippsland Water representative has been utilised. A previous sewer study conducted for Fish Creek and Dumbalk (KPM, 2014) was used in developing the concept.

The following assumptions were agreed. These included:

- Conservatively, the system would need to be designed to assume that all premises could be used as a restaurant able to service a maximum of 50 people.
- Existing lot sizes are not appropriate for additional effluent dispersal due to a number of factors including existing over development of site, small dispersal area size and the anticipated

need for future commercial space (includes equipment, storage, staff parking, and alfresco dining spaces).

Based on these assumptions and established EPAV quantifiers, the existing businesses and vacant land have the potential to generate 46,900 litres of effluent per day. Future commercial growth anticipated within suggested expansion areas would add an additional 9000 litres of effluent per day.

South Gippsland Water (SGW) provided information gathered from other parts of the Shire to give an indication of the likely daily flow rates for some types of commercial activities. These are sourced from areas with a town water supply (considered to be unlimited daily supply) which is quite different from Venus Bay that relies upon rainfall supplying water via tanks for most commercial activities. The daily flow rate figures used in the development of this concept are comparable with those supplied by South Gippsland Water.

Systems such as a small scale sewerage scheme manage over 5000 litres of effluent per day. This amount of effluent increases the risks associated with treatment processes and means that a licence from the Victorian Environmental Protection Authority (EPAV) would be required. This is an area for further investigation and consultation with SGW and EPAV during detailed design and implementation.

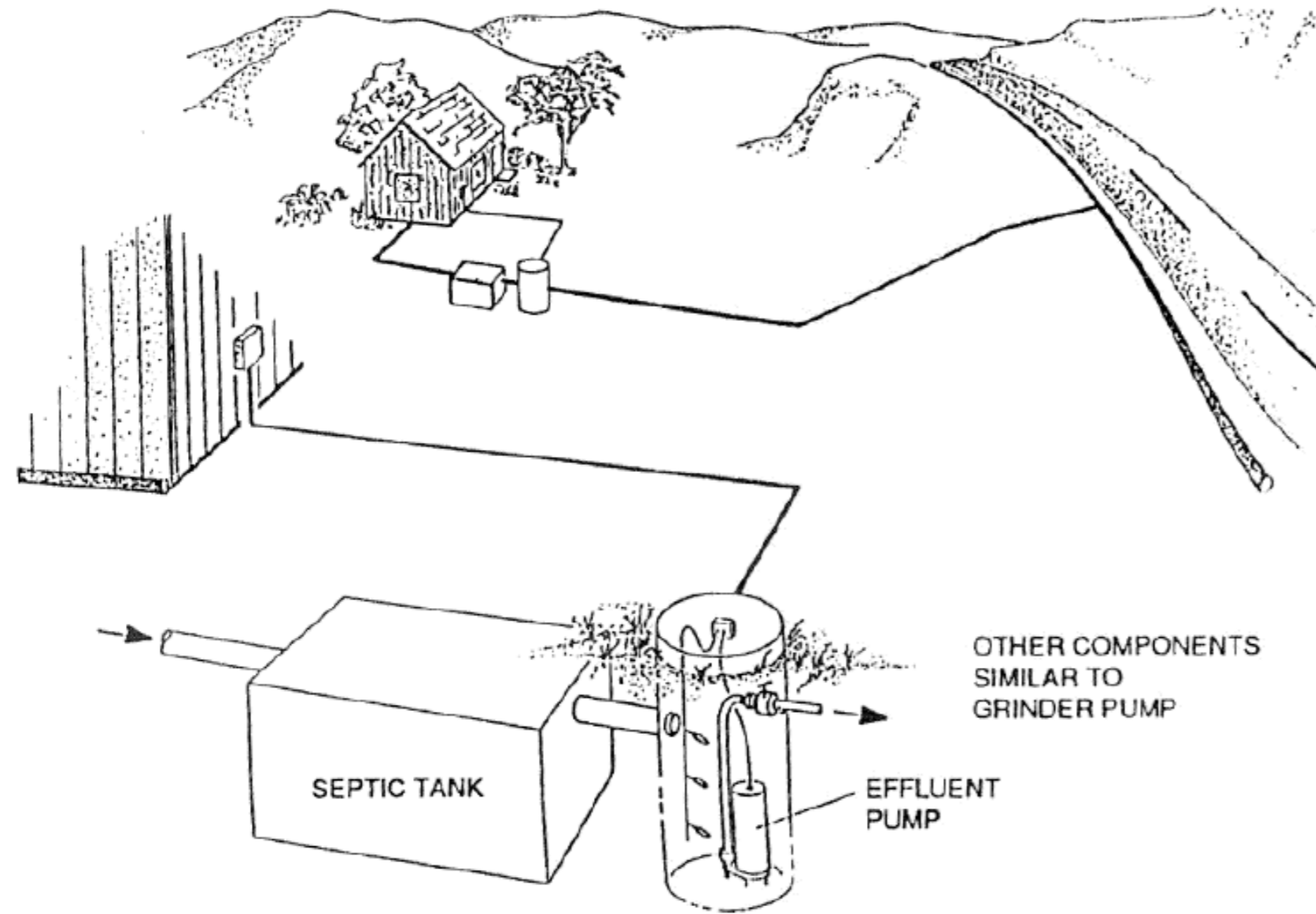
Off-site Treatment Option

In the coarse sandy soil that is found in Venus Bay, the best on-site treatment technology available in this context is currently advanced secondary treatment of effluent (20 BOD, 30 mg Suspended Solids with nutrient reduction) and dispersed through a wicking bed sized to apply effluent at a rate of no more than 5 litres per metre² per day.

The concept for an off-site treatment system assumes that this standard of effluent is the minimum to be met for effluent treatment and dispersal.

As the existing septic tank systems within the commercial centre are of a secondary treatment standard it is possible to consider a Septic Tank Effluent Pumping System (STEPS). This type of system provides a lower cost collection and treatment system compared with a conventional pressure reticulated (piped) system.

In instances such as this, it uses the existing septic tanks to partially treat the wastewater and pump the remaining nutrient rich effluent (most solids removed) via shallow pipes to the final treatment and dispersal area (see diagram below).



STEPS Arrangement, Alternative Sewer Systems, 2008.

Treatment & Dispersal Site

Due to the undulating coastal undulating sand dune landscape, soil constraints and residential density of the Venus Bay Peninsula, it is most likely that the most appropriate treatment option available is the Rotating Biological Contactor (RBC).

This system is quite compact and treats the effluent by exposing it to conditions that contain air (aerobic) and no air (anaerobic) to maximise the treatment by bacteria possible. This results in a clarified effluent (less biological oxygen demand – BOD and suspended solids) which after disinfection, should that be necessary, be safely dispersed to the land via drip irrigation or other suitable system.

The use of a Rotating Biological Contactor (RBC) reduces the required setback than that for a traditional lagoon system as it is much less likely to create adverse conditions (noise and smell) for neighbouring properties.

In developing the concept design, possible locations for treatment and dispersal were reviewed. Constraints on most locations included; not enough land to treat and disperse all the anticipated wastewater generated, are subject to flooding, contain acid-sulphate soils that should not be disturbed or do not provide sufficient buffer distances to residential properties.

Potential sites were sought within Estate 1 to minimise capital and ongoing costs of piping and pumps between the wastewater

generators and the treatment and dispersal location.

Private land is currently available for sale adjacent to the commercial precinct but is not large enough to provide for current total wastewater loads or those anticipated for commercial growth.

The land identified as most suitable and reasonably proximate to the commercial precinct is 130 Inlet View Road, which is owned by the Victorian Government (DELWP managed). Public land is desirable as often they better provide for multiple benefits to the community, for example public open space and habitat for wildlife.

The site is 5.67 hectares in area which would allow for meeting future commercial needs and allow for reasonable buffers to neighbouring low density residential properties.



Typical arrangement of a RBC treatment plant - KBR, Fish Creek Sewer Study, 2014

Capital Costs

The installation of the pipe network and treatment machinery form the main component of the capital cost for a sewerage scheme.

An estimate, based on figures provided for Fish Creek in 2014, concludes that each of the 19 properties (on an equal split basis) would likely need to contribute approximately \$40,000 to the capital cost.

A detailed sewer study will confirm these estimates and consider the following areas of cost in more detail:

- Design cost – detailed design of system pipe network and treatment facility.
- Capital cost – to install the system, including cost of equipment, excavations.
- Ongoing cost – maintenance of system – funded through rates from users of the system
- Replacement cost – end of life replacement, may be in approximately 25 years – 50 years depending upon the type of system.

There is also an option for managers of public conveniences (such as Council or Parks Victoria) to pay a higher proportion of the capital cost. This would be a recognition that peak loads from tourists using their facilities impose significant peak daily loads and that the scheme overall provides a wider community benefit.

Ongoing Costs

All systems will have some ongoing costs as well as end of life replacement costs. Current practice includes these costs in considering which improved treatment system is the most cost effective.

Some of the ongoing costs for a STEP/RBC/irrigation system include:

- Administration of scheme (includes capital expenditure contribution collection and ongoing service billing)
- Septic tank maintenance (4 per year) and sludge removal (every 3 years)
- Transfer pump and pipe maintenance
- RBC maintenance and management
- Dispersal system (drip irrigation) maintenance

Depending upon how the scheme is constructed, the costs of maintenance could be managed by a single authority to be billed out to the users, or a hybrid where users maintain the infrastructure on their own sites and pay a lower rate to the managing authority.

The latter would require a compliance program similar to that currently being implemented by Council for its existing septic tank systems. To maintain maximum consistency in effluent quality and robustness of the treatment system, the former centralised management arrangement is likely the most suitable for implementation.

Conclusion

The concept of a small scale STEPS sewerage scheme for the tourism precinct (and possible inclusion of some residential development - shop top apartments) has merit.

A detailed Feasibility Report will be necessary to confirm suitable design and the cost of a such a scheme. Once this has occurred, formal discussions with DELWP in relation to the identified potential location and the owners and businesses that are potential customers of such a scheme can occur.

It is recommended that Council undertake further investigation with South Gippsland Water, DELWP and EPA Victoria. This is to include:

- Confirm the availability of land at 130 Inlet View Road for the proposed purpose.
- Meet with stakeholders (future users of system) to confirm interest in project going forward.
- Council to agree that this is a project that needs progression and officially request South Gippsland Water to investigate.

- Commission a sewer study to determine suitable system type and associated costs.
- Liaise with EPA Victoria to understand required licences.
- Investigate possible external funding streams to implement scheme.
- Develop funding models (such as low interest Environmental Upgrade Agreements) for businesses and owners who wish to participate.

Objectives & Strategies

The following objectives and strategies apply to all areas within the VBTPP and will be implemented when funding and resources are available.

A safe and usable tourism precinct that is high quality, comfortable, safe, accessible, pedestrian-focused and inviting to visitors.

- Provide pedestrian and cycling the connectivity between the commercial centre, community centre, public open spaces, the foreshore, Estates 2 and 3 and Tarwin Lower (as identified in the Paths and Trails Strategy (2018)).
- Undertake a project to design entrance features that are welcoming, contribute to the town's character and identify and provide clear directional signs at the town entrance and key intersections within the tourism precinct.
- Prepare detailed design of the streetscape based on the Tourism Precinct Streetscape Concept Plan that:
 - Uses high quality, design, materials, street furniture, public art, landscape and the retention or planting of native vegetation within landscaped areas
 - Provides adequate bicycle parking and end of trip infrastructure to promote more cycling and reduce vehicle use.
 - Includes street trees that provide shade.

The Venus Bay Tourism Precinct is a prosperous neighbourhood activity centre primarily focused on local and tourism services.

- Rezone land in the to encourage a wider range of tourism-related retail / commercial uses and other services that respond to additional market demand.
- Continue to promote cold weather tourism activities and seek a diverse mix of compatible uses that generate activity at all times of the year.
- Seek additional funding to implement tourism precinct streetscape improvements as set out in the Venus Bay Tourism Precinct Plan, including new car park and skate park.

A coastal hamlet in which the buildings and infrastructure sensitively integrates with the surrounding coastal environment.

- Apply a Design and Development Overlay that guides design for a compact commercial centre set into and sensitive to the surrounding environment. The overlay could address potential noise and overlooking issues at the commercial and residential interface through the provision of suitable buffers.
- Provide public open spaces within precinct that are part of a connected network, providing for recreation and play, social gatherings, peaceful contemplation and natural habitats.

Principles of resource conservation are used to support environmental values.

- Prepare detailed design of the streetscape based on the Tourism Precinct Streetscape Concept Plan that includes native vegetation for habitat and biodiversity.
- Prepare a Wastewater System Feasibility Report to progress wastewater management improvements.

Consultation

The following outlines the findings of the consultation for the Venus Bay Streetscape Concept Plan which commenced in early January and closed in early March.

It sought to inform the resident and visitor population about the project and seek their advice on a plan for streetscape improvements.

How We Told People

Council used an on-line map forum, via the Our Say platform, to engage with the community. This allowed Council to provide information on the existing conditions within the township, location of community assets and facilities (community centre, toilets, park, car parking, rubbish bins, lights, etc).

It also enabled the community to make comments on particular locations, giving Council a clear geographic context to comments made. An example of this being that improved signs are desired and the location is important to achieve usefulness.

During the consultation period a number of Facebook messages were posted, news articles, local newsletter (Matter of Fact), posters, postcards and individual visits to business owners were used to promote the consultation. In addition, the Our Say database was used to contact registered users with an interest in the Venus Bay area.

On the 19th January 2019, Council officers visited the shopping precinct with maps and illustrations to meet with community members and visitors to encourage engagement and feedback on developed plans and future directions.

Officers engaged with an estimated 200 people over a period of 6 hours on that day and collected a range of comments via sticky notes on hard copy maps and was catalyst for an increase in visitors (many which resulted in comments, votes and replies to comments) within the on-line map forum (see figure below).

A hard copy plan was displayed at the Venus Bay Community Centre from the 20 January to the end of February through which additional “sticky note” comments were received.

In addition, owners of land within and adjacent to the commercial precinct received letters inviting comment on the proposed Streetscape Concept Plan.

Facebook Post



Website

http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/news/article/120/venus_bay_activity_centre_planning

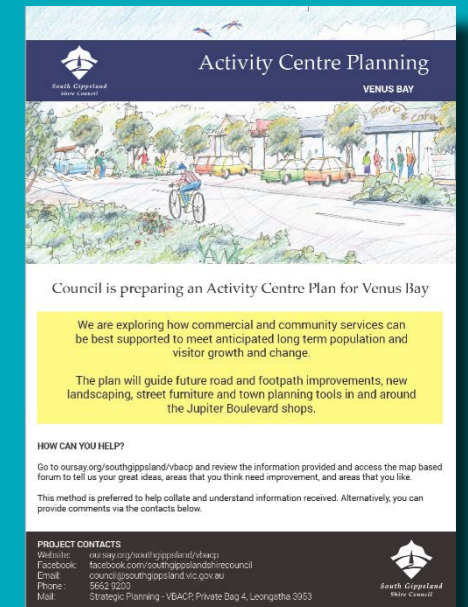


Our Say

www.oursay.org/southgippsland/vbacp



Post Card



Poster

What We Told People


We provided a concept plan of what could be improved in the streetscape to address known issues and opportunities.

CONCEPT DESIGN LEGEND

- Reconstructed / rehabilitated asphalt pavement
- New / reconstructed concrete paving
- Landscaped Area Topsoil and seeded
- Landscaped Area - Top Soil and Mulch
- New street tree in 1.0 m tree surround
- New/reconstructed pedestrian crossing to SD700
- Proposed stormwater drain and pit
- Existing stormwater drain and pit
- New / reconstructed SM2 kerb and channel
- New / reconstructed SM1 kerb

SURVEY FEATURE LEGEND

- Existing Drainage
- Proposed Drainage
- Telecom
- Water Main
- S.E.C. Line
- Fence Line
- Kerb and Channel
- Gas Line
- Existing Road
- Proposed Centreline
- Top of Bank
- Top of Pole
- Tree
- Temporary Benchmark

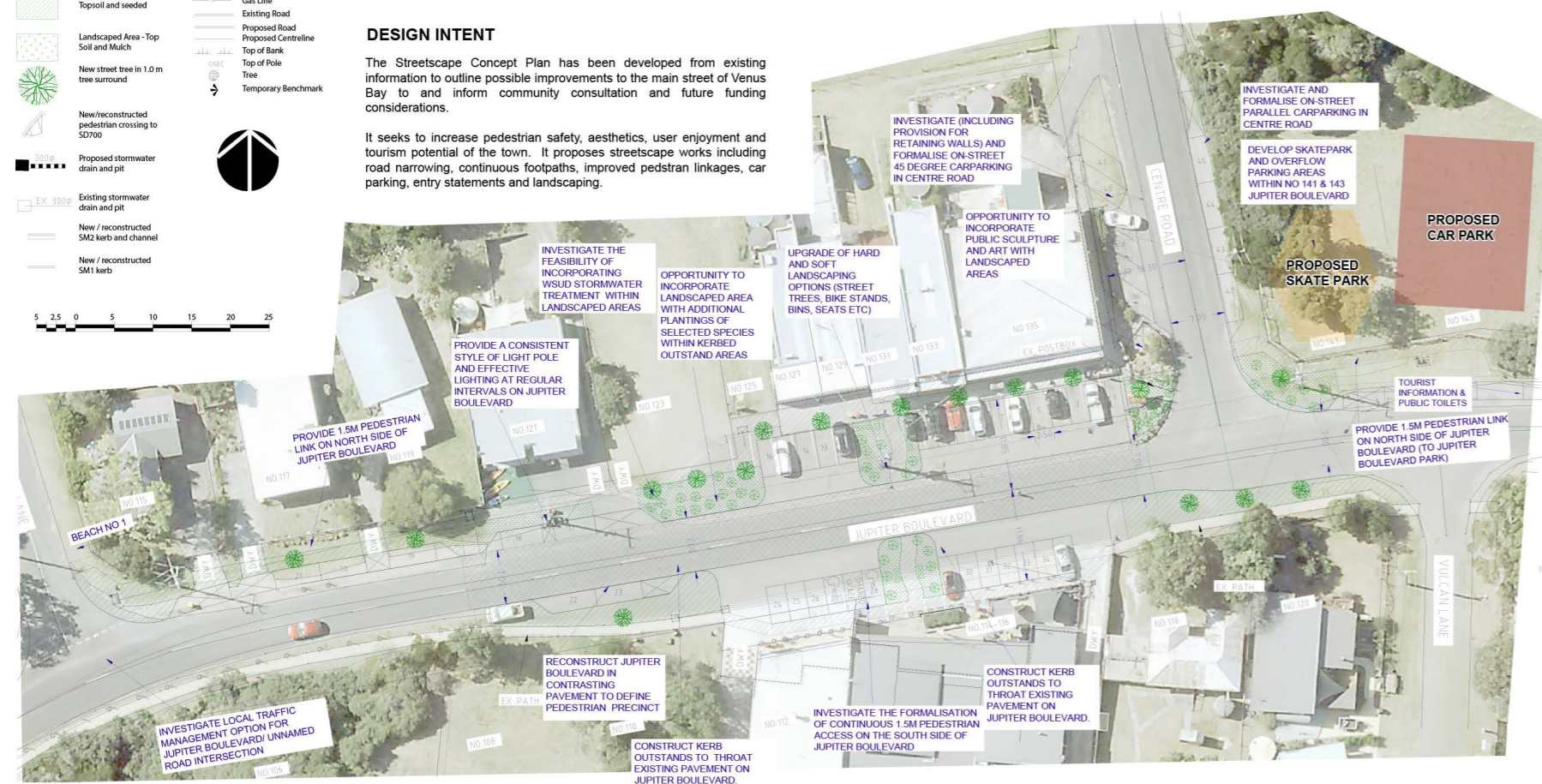


VENUS BAY STREETScape CONCEPT PLAN

DESIGN INTENT

The Streetscape Concept Plan has been developed from existing information to outline possible improvements to the main street of Venus Bay to and inform community consultation and future funding considerations.

It seeks to increase pedestrian safety, aesthetics, user enjoyment and tourism potential of the town. It proposes streetscape works including road narrowing, continuous footpaths, improved pedestrian linkages, car parking, entry statements and landscaping.



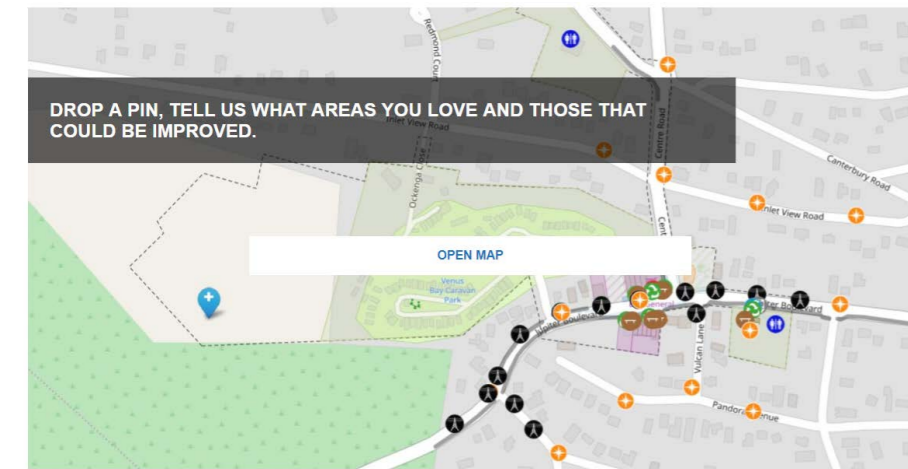

We also provided sketches of the design to assist in their understanding of what plans could look like on the ground.

How They Told Us

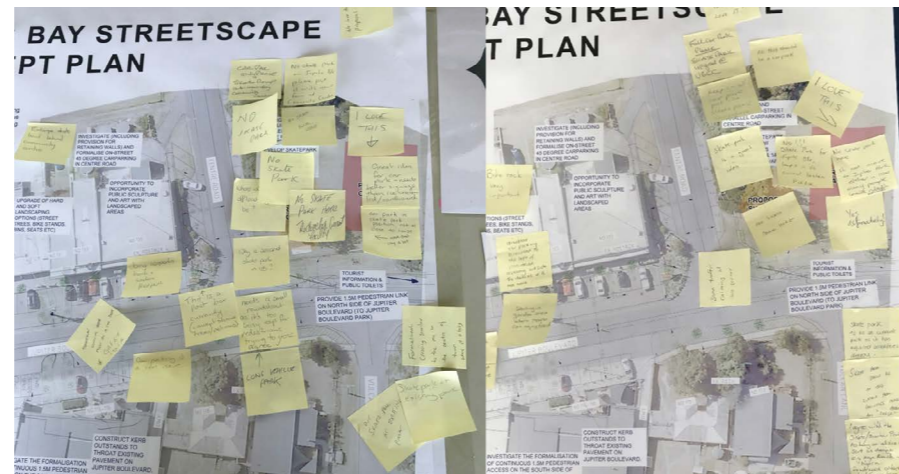
People engaged with the project and participated by submitting comments via a range of avenues. These included:

- Filling out a survey on-line via the Our Say map forum
- Sending a submission via email, by mail or in person
- Visiting the street stall or community centre and adding a sticky note

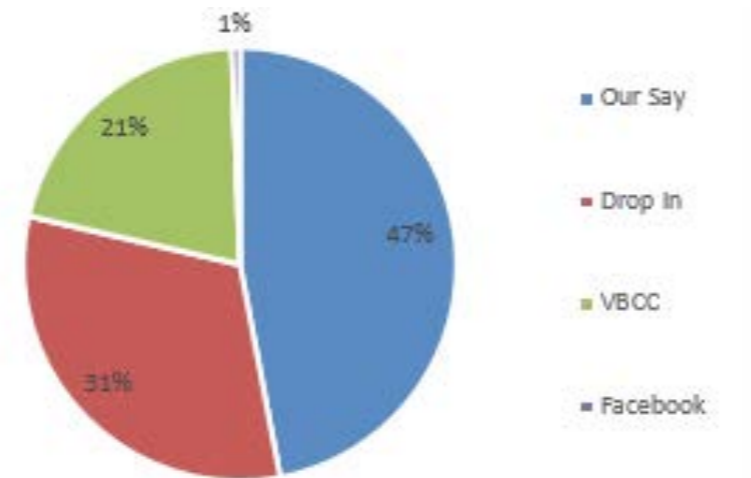
Images were also welcomed to illustrate people's ideas with this option available this time via the Map Forum (Our Say).



Map Forum, Our Say, 2019



Community Feedback, 2019



Interaction Source, Our Say, 2019

The Results

Council received over 200 submissions via Facebook posts, completed Our Say map forum questionnaire, hard copy comments from displayed maps, discussions with people and emails.

The clearly articulated that they would like Council to:

- Make the street more pedestrian friendly and safe
- Provide additional car parking at 141-143 Jupiter Boulevard
- Provide public art space
- Provide shade trees, and use native vegetation species in landscaping
- Slow the traffic down

There were divergent and to some extent mutually exclusive views about the proposed new entry level skate park and its location. Many expressed concerns about the safety of a skate park on the corner location (141 Jupiter Boulevard) and that car parking was more important, while others expressed their support for a skate park including the investigation of an alternative location at the existing Jupiter Boulevard Park.

Most respondents were community members residing in Venus Bay or other localities in South Gippsland. Some respondents were from other locations, south east Melbourne and Latrobe Valley, indicating that the on-line forum and community stall during the summer period was able to access visitors or absentee owners.

Interest in the project was highest in the weeks after publicity and in the lead up to the community stall.



Period	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
31/12/2018 - 06/01/2019	0	1	11	19	3	3	5
07/01/2019 - 13/01/2019	11	12	5	7	20	4	4
14/01/2019 - 20/01/2019	95	38	26	40	31	14	8
21/01/2019 - 27/01/2019	11	6	4	6	9	4	2
28/01/2019 - 03/02/2019	4	16	3	16	11	5	3
04/02/2019 - 10/02/2019	4	6	9	2	2	0	2
11/02/2019 - 17/02/2019	2	4	9	6	3	5	0
18/02/2019 - 24/02/2019	5	6	3	4	5	2	3
25/02/2019 - 03/03/2019	11	6	6	3	1	6	1
03/03/2019 - 03/03/2019	1						
04/03/2019 - 06/03/2019	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Our Say Visitation

Feedback

There is a lot of enthusiasm for the project with many people asking when the streetscape improvements can be completed.

Face-to-face contact provided the opportunity to educate the community about the project and broach ideas around wastewater management improvements with business owners.

The Message

Some people had difficulty with the Our Say platform, particularly those on mobile phones. But alternative options were available to all and utilised when required.

Some people thought the project was more advanced than it was because a 'plan' had been prepared. This can lead to dissatisfaction and frustration within the community.

Council could provide better communication around the time lines of infrastructure projects. This would include how a concept plan and artists impressions help to develop ideas with the community.

Also, that these plans allow us to better communicate these ideas to potential funding authorities, such as the Victorian or Federal Governments, ultimately resulting in better funding outcomes for the community.

Street Stall

At the street stall conversations with the community often started off with the line 'we need more car parking' or 'the skate park should/ shouldn't go there'.

After discussion and reflection on the positive aspects of walking and cycling, people were more focused on making the street more attractive and safe for visitors and residents alike.

This facilitated a wider discussion of how the tourism precinct could better serve the community into the future could be developed, including how seasonality could be overcome for business retention and prosperity.

Key Messages

Improve pedestrian safety

Many people suggested improvements to how pedestrians could cross the road more safely.

The general consensus was for the central north-south crossing to be a raised “wombat” zebra crossing which prioritises pedestrians over vehicle. Some further suggestions were around installation of a round-about at Centre Road and entrance to Caravan Park.

A number of comments related to the better connection of pathways, in particular, between 112 and 114-116 Jupiter Boulevard (Fish and Chip shop to Cavity Bar) and the pathway between the General store and the Community Centre along Centre Road.



Temporary bollards provide pedestrian access at 144-116 Jupiter Bvd

“Street lighting also needs upgrading, currently it’s too dark and dangerous for [pedestrians].”

“Should be a marked zebra crossing with flashing lights to ensure right of way given to pedestrians crossing the road.”

“Long term plan should extend walking/bike path to join onto Mad Mile pathway. Currently dangerous with 60k speed, kids, bikes and joggers.”

“Separate paths from car parking areas, don’t have pedestrians walking behind vehicles and need to slow down through traffic such as a roundabout on Jupiter and Centre Road.”

“Further asphalt / sealing of gravel roads. Accessible pedestrian pathways at both sides of the shopping centre”

“It is very dangerous. So many people walk their families, dogs and ride their bikes along Canterbury road. Cars often speed”

The Tourism Precinct Streetscape Concept Plan includes a raised “wombat” pedestrian crossing as well as a raised intersection at Centre Road (as a preferred option for pedestrian safety to a round-about) to slow the traffic and prioritise pedestrians and cyclists. Additional street lights will be considered in future detailed design, but focus will be on the area identified across from Jupiter Boulevard Park.

Improve Signage

There were calls for better signage in town, particularly to direct visitors to amenities at Jupiter Boulevard Park, as well as Beach Number One and the Community Centre. Also to direct traffic away from the centre of town, for example to Estate 2, before they arrive at Centre Road.



Directional signs in Leongatha, Victoria, 2019

The Tourism Precinct Streetscape Concept Plan identifies the locations that require additional way finding signs. The installation of additional directional signs will be raised with Vic Roads at the next liaison meeting with Council engineering staff.

Sign design should be coordinated with other current projects such as Van Cleefe Reserve Master Plan to develop a town wide design palette. This is something to be considered during detailed design and reflect the coastal environment & character.

“Signage to slow traffic down in Jupiter Blvd. In the side streets also.”

“I agree There is only one sign indicating patrolled beach at that is as you come into VB. Important to put another sign before Centre Rd”

“Range of interpretive signage panels and sculptures throughout the town educating both locals and visitors about the significance of the environment here and how to care for it - must include language adaptation for Chinese and other Asian visitors.

“This would be great, lots of day visitors don’t know that the no1 beach is patrolled by SLSC, has a toilet, bins, and other beaches don’t”

“Tourist info at Jupiter Park.”

Improve Parking

Many comments were in relation to the availability of parking, with a clear desire to not reduce the numbers of car parks through the redesign process and continue to meet what is perceived as a growing day parking need.

A number of comments were received that encouraged the provision of bicycle paths and facilities to reduce reliance on cars in the commercial precinct.



"More car parking i.e.. vacant land on corner of Jupiter and centre roads purchased for car park and is currently being used as such"

"Proposal shows trees / grass. This area is used regularly by many cars with trailers or caravans. Plan needs to allow long car parking."

"Parking. Not a skate park on the corner of Jupiter Blvd and Centre Rd"

"Extra parking is only required for about 4-6 weeks a year. An open area/park/market/cinema etc will be better use of land"

The Tourism Precinct Streetscape Concept Plan redefines the area at 141-143 Jupiter Boulevard as a car park with options to use it for community market days, post box, additional bicycle parking, public open space, landscaping and long vehicle car parking options.

This was achieved in part by identifying a more strategic and practical location for a new entry level skate park (in Jupiter Boulevard Park) and rethinking how different components in the streetscape work (or don't work) together.

Provide Shade

The provision of shade in the streetscape by trees was popular. The town is most popular during the very hot months of December to February and the street currently has a vast amount of dark pavement that retains the heat exacerbating the effects of direct sunshine.



"Trees along shopping strip would be extremely important project"

"Like all the trees and the plants"

"Agree. Trees clustered along shopping strip would look fantastic because it grows over time. Ten benches under shady trees!"

"Trees, trees, trees, yes please!"

The Tourism Precinct Streetscape Concept Plan provides for more shade in the street through street tree planting in combination with existing weather protection. In addition, the trees will provide a visual distraction from the intrusive height of the power lines.

Additional weather protection is to be encouraged through the implementation of a Design and Development Overlay for the commercial precinct.

Provide Al Fresco Dining

Several businesses asked for more al fresco / outdoor dining area in the street. This provides greater opportunity for an “active” streetscape that will create a sense of place and vibrancy to support of greater commercial activity.



“Wider streetscape to provide alfresco eating.”

“More street trading to create atmosphere”

“There needs to be more things to create tourist activity in the off season when the business are started to really struggle. It would also be great to see more of the foreshore areas used such as a cafe near the Anderson inlet boat jetty, some pop up stalls at the main beach car selling food and drink.”

The Tourism Precinct Streetscape Concept Plan provides for more space for alfresco dining spaces. This will provide greater opportunities for businesses and support a more lively and engaging streetscape.

Slow Traffic

A number of people asked for the traffic to be slowed down, namely for public safety and in particular in the centre of town.



Raised pedestrian crossing example, Sorrento, Victoria

“Enforce 30 KPH speed limit from Lee Road to Beach #1.”

“Concept looks positive reducing through traffic speeds to make it safer to cross the road and to ride a bike.”

“Pedestrian access to beach 3 needs to be in proved, with traffic calming, speed restrictions and stricter parking supervision”

“Speed limits along Jupiter Blvd need to be lowered 50km to Juno and 40 kms to Surf Drive.”

The Tourism Precinct Streetscape Concept Plan proposes to restrict traffic so that it slows down and improves pedestrian safety. These measures include traffic calming treatments such as raised and contrast pavements and narrowing of the road.

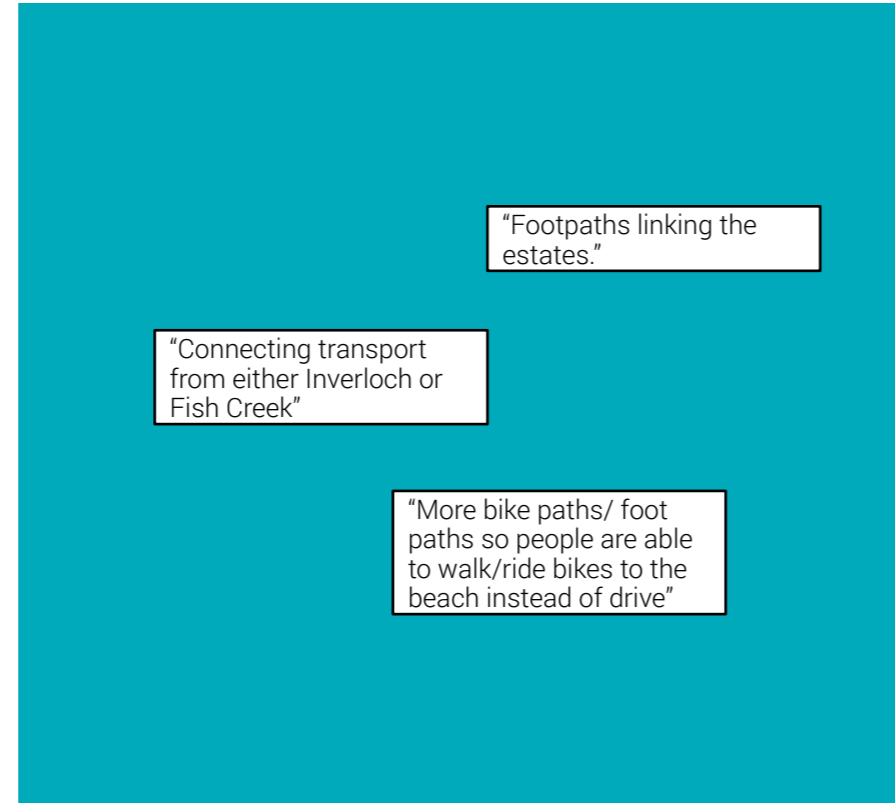
Traffic calming treatments are proposed to start at entrance features near Canterbury Road and Jupiter Boulevard intersection. This is to ensure that not only safety within the commercial precinct is maintained but that traffic is also slowed around the Jupiter Boulevard Park and Caravan Park entrance.

Better Transport Options

Public forms of transport are lacking in the area with no public transport between neighbouring service centre townships (Tarwin Lower, Inverloch, Wonthaggi or Leongatha).

Two community driven transport programs are in place, one to assist transport to regional shopping centres (Mens Shed) and the other to transport people to the beach during the busy summer period (Venus Bay Community House).

In addition, there is minimal availability of foot and cycle pathways between residences, shops and beach. This in part maintains the popular beach village character, but is to the detriment of safe and accessible walking and cycling transport modes.



The Tourism Precinct Streetscape Concept Plan proposes to greater support for alternative transport options to the vehicle, such as pathways for better pedestrian and bicycle access, traffic calming and end of trip facilities for safer and easier cycling.

In addition, the bus stop near Jupiter Boulevard Park is to be retained and improved to support current and future public transport opportunities.

Skate Park

The Skate Park was a topic of much conflict and discussion, in part for the actual need for the facility but also its location.

While a few thought that it should be located as far away from the town and residents as possible, many were happy to have it in the tourism precinct, but not on the corner of Centre Road. This view was generally due to the need for car parking and concerns with children safety.



Concept design for skate park, en:locus, 2018.

The Tourism Precinct Streetscape Concept Plan proposes to consider Jupiter Boulevard Park as a more suitable location for a new entry level skate park due to availability of public toilets while maintaining adequate public surveillance to prevent antisocial behaviours.

The provision of a skate park is considered to be beneficial for the provision of cooler weather activities for local and visiting young people.



Support for Tourism

Many respondents were very interested in how Venus Bay could support the tourism industry of the area better, particularly in the off-season.

There were a number of comments that encouraged the addition of visitor educational materials. This was in part to assist sustainable management of pipi collection, but also to recognise the other important natural resources the area, offering recreational fishing as well as nature appreciation and conservation.

Better use of open spaces for tourism appeal during the colder weather was suggested.

"There needs to be more things to create tourist activity in the off season when the business are started to really struggle. It would also be great to see more of the foreshore areas used such as a cafe near the Anderson inlet boat jetty, some pop up stalls at the main beach car [park] selling food and drink."

"Town needs to embrace the Pipi culture .i.e. yearly weekend festival like the Kilcunda lobster festival, Asian street food market, hawkers"

"Would like a park for eating lunch, fish and chips landscaped with seating here"

The Tourism Precinct Plan identifies some improvements within the tourism precinct to better direct visitors to key points of interest. It is unable at this stage to comment too much on other areas that are focal points for a range of diverse activities, such as the Estate 2 Jetty and Estate 3 Point Smythe coastal walk but they are important aspects of the town's wider tourism offering.

The jetty in Estate 2 is an area of great beauty, with local kangaroo mobs, bird life and fish. Its location is an area that provides an alternative landscape of interest to that of the wild untamed Venus Bay beach and provides access to the wider Andersons Inlet for boating activities.

Town Appearance & Character

The town appearance and character is articulated in Council's Planning Scheme in that we seek "ecologically sustainable and attractive forms of development that complement the natural environmental characteristics of Venus Bay" (SGSC PS Cl 21.15-9)

Entrance features were generally supported to reflect the town's character, set the culture for visitors to the area and provide traffic calming effects.



The Tourism Precinct Streetscape Concept Plan identifies a preferred location for entrance features. The protection of the expressed township character will be assisted by the implementation of a Planning Scheme Design and Development Overlay to control building form and design to be ecological sustainable and respect the surrounding natural environmental characteristics.

"Friendly gateway, indigenous artist to Venus Bay – project"

"The town also needs a unique identity or attraction that we are known by and that tourists want to come and visit Winter or Summer and take a photo of."

"Excellent idea...need some sense of place or entrance to town."

"Local character and Environmental protection measures"

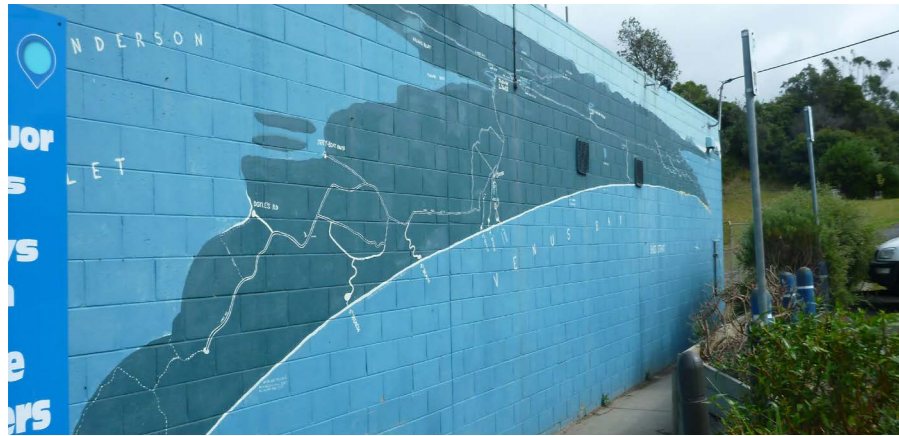
"Excellent idea...need some sense of place or entrance to town"

"Continued focus on the design and development overlay to maintain coastal appeal and vegetation and wildlife."

More Public Art

Art is commonly important to communities in developing a sense of place and as an expression of the community values as a whole. It provides opportunity for visitor and local resident education on important local environmental and cultural matters for the benefit of the town and landscape as a whole.

Public art is a popular request in Venus Bay. Opportunities for public art has been a matter of community aspiration for many years and continues to be something that matters to the community.



The Tourism Precinct Streetscape Concept Plan identifies the community's desire to include public art in public open spaces and landscaped areas.

“Local art within the shopping precinct to strengthen the place of Venus Bay.”

“Local art within the shopping precinct to strengthen the place of Venus Bay.”

Ben placed a pin here and thinks,
I have attached an image below of the bollards I am referring to. Similar to Geelong foreshore but with characters unique to venus bay



Support Comments(0) Share

Art is commonly important to communities in developing a sense of place and as an expression of the community values as a whole. It provides opportunity for visitor and local resident education on important local environmental and cultural matters for the benefit of the town and landscape as a whole.

“Yes please! Local indigenous flora and fauna. Or ocean scape/ map similar to awesome one on the side of the General Store..”

The community said...

- A bakery.
- Wider street scape to provide alfresco eating.
- Power pole should be removed from outside the shops and underground power installed.
- A board walk track cut through the dunes to allow wild life/bird watching etc.
- Enlarge the sitting area at beach one , more tables and permanent cafe
- 141-143 Jupiter Bvd should be solely used for car parking.
- Question the need for skate park but thinks Jupiter Park or Community Centre better fit for location.
- Skate parks can be located away from the CBD.
- Concept looks positive reducing through traffic speeds to make it safer to cross the road and to ride a bike. Giving it a more village feel.
- A bakery and a Service Station.
- A boardwalk from beach 1 to 5 with spaced seating so disabled, elderly, Pram users can enjoy the beach.
- A pier would be great too!
- A servo might help.
- A sidewalk on one side is badly needed. This is the closest beach access for a large proportion of the western side of this estate
- A skate park here will add to noise and congestion, kids will ride boards through the busiest section of VB, & it would look UGLY.
- About time
- Accommodating bike access would be a big plus. Bikes free up parking space and many people use them to access town.
- Additional facilities required as current ones do not meet peak / summer needs.
- Giant chess set gets a lot of use and connects people. Would be great in park setting - near playground for kids both young and old.
- Better facilities needed, but please do not relocate toilets and bbq's to the new skate park site [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]!
- Agree that food trucks would be a great feature in this area [Beach Number One]. But should have flexibility to be developed in to a commercial property in the future.
- Agree to this being car park [141-143 Jupiter Bvd], consideration needs to be given to impact on Centre Rd/Jupiter Blvd for entry/ exit.
- Agree, a little kiosk would be great and definitely some more

The community said...

- picnic tables would be helpful during peak periods.
- Agree. At least make it a shared space.
- Trees clustered along shopping strip would look fantastic because it grows over time. Ten benches under shady trees!
- The widening has been good [path on Centre Rd between Inlet View and Canterbury Roads], but we need demarcation between road and footpath.
- All this should be car park [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]
- An off-lead dog park would benefit dogs, owners and birds.
- An outdoor cinema can only operate when it's dark and this is right next door to people's homes [141-143 Jupiter Bvd].
- Approach summer season like an event: provide additional rubbish and toilets to cater for visitors.
- As the tourist population grows, more bike paths/ foot paths so people are able to walk/ride bikes to the beach instead of drive
- At shops - parking for towing.
- More tables / chairs. Public toilets at the shops.
- Love the greenery - just don't overload with too much!
- Beach side facilities- more space, tables, shelters, BBQ, toilets. A small booth/shop selling coffee and ice cream by the beach- could be run by the Surf Lifesaving Club for profits.
- A big information sign on the beach, in multiple languages, specifically about wildlife and fishing guidelines (where to walk dogs, pipi collection rules).
- The ramp to beach 1 is not user friendly or safe, nor disability friendly. The same track is used by vehicles and pedestrians- which is very unsafe, especially in emergencies.
- Create a bike track/scenic ride through the sand dunes, from the main street to the beach.
- More bike paths and pedestrians- all the main roads are shared roads, which can get busy and overcrowded in summer with cars posing a danger to kids on bikes.
- A town bakery! Everyone has been asking for this type of business. You can't buy a fresh pie at Venus Bay.
- More of a green public park/facility in the main street, with more mature trees. Somewhere to sit and have your fish and chips/ have a BBQ.
- A coastal walk way, from beach one to two, through the dunes. Could link up to the track from Estate 1 to beach (which is also run down and needs improvement, it's overgrown and fence is destroyed etc).
- Better pedestrian paths to help accommodate additional car and foot traffic

The community said...

- Bike rack very important
- Block access to sand dunes and add more signage to inform of the destruction of these dunes. More planting on dunes that have been eroded.
- Bring car parks back & widen footpath
- Build steps & lookout landing a Beach One. Stop all that sand erosion caused by so many people climbing over dunes.
- Build steps with ... platforms to allow people with medical issues a chance to rest on the way down to the beach.
- Car park in skate park position, not as close to house [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]. Move [left] a bit
- Car park only please [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]. Skate ramp at Venus Bay Community Centre.
- Car parking is a real issue
- Centre Rd to No 121[Jupiter Bvd]. Shared 10 KM zone
- Combining a major car park with a skate park seems like an accident waiting to happen. It is unlikely skateboards will be carried through car park
- Community herb garden, wall gardens
- Concrete path in front of Beach One car park
- Connecting [public] transport from either Inverloch or Fish Creek. Taxis only way here if you don't have car.
- Consistent lighting - much needed
- Council stuffed up here [114-116 Jupiter Bvd] Now let them fix it without detriment to any business
- Disabled car parking allocated to the left of pedestrian crossing outside the chemist or 15 min zone
- Disabled toilets and showers [Beach Number One]. Beach ramp board. All terrain wheelchair and walk.
- Don't think it needs much more but it needs better car parking and safer pedestrian paths. i.e. separate paths from car parking areas, don't have pedestrians walking behind vehicles and need to slow down through traffic such as a roundabout on Jupiter and Centre Road.
- Enforce 30 KPH speed limit from Lee Road to Beach 1.
- Enlarge skate bowl behind community centre
- Excellent idea...need some sense of place or entrance to town
- Extra parking is only required for about 4-6 weeks a year. An open area/park/market/cinema etc will be better use of land
- Footpaths linking the estates.
- Kindergarten locally.

The community said...

- Tarwin should be considered the service town for Venus Bay to retain the village atmosphere. Continued focus on the design and development overlay to maintain coastal appeal and vegetation and wildlife.
- Formalised crossing similar to the one in the centre of town where it is busy
- Friendly Gateway indigenous artist to Venus Bay - project [idea]
- Full car park please [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]. Skate Park upgrade @ VBCC
- Further asphalt / sealing of gravel roads.
- Accessible pedestrian pathways at both sides of the shopping centre.
- Local art within the shopping precinct to strengthen the place of Venus Bay.
- Our own supermarket, like Tarwin Lower has which will reduce traffic, assist with visitors / residents meeting walkable city principles.
- Local character and Environmental protection measures.
- Given the level of traffic congestion that occurs in this area this is the wrong place for a skate park [141-143 Jupiter Bvd].

- Great idea for car park [141-143 Jupiter Bvd] - needs better signage than ice cream lid/ cardboard
- Great idea for letting people have their say
- Great idea, very much needed especially in summer [141-143 Jupiter Bvd].
- Great idea. The way items are now placed over the parking spots makes it more dangerous for pedestrians [pedestrian access in front of 114-116 Jupiter Bvd]
- Great idea. This could be funded through people & local business donations with acknowledgments of a plaque recognising their donation.
- Has anyone consulted with the residents to see if anyone wants a skate park?
- Higher standard & more options of hospitality businesses. Venus Bay lags far behind in the quality of these businesses & they will always attract visitors if they are done well
- I agree [additional way-finding signs] There is only one sign indicating patrolled beach at that is as you come into VB. Important to put another sign before Centre Rd
- I agree with the skate / scooter park. As long as advice is [sought] on design. E.g. Mega ranch in Nyora. Do not mind where, but somewhere.

The community said...

- I think that Venus Bay has enough shops and that anymore shops should be in Tarwin Lower
- Ideas [public art]: Yellow tailed black cockatoo. Wombat. Rosella. Giant banksia flower. Plovers.
- If we must have a skate park. Why not have the skate park in the existing park/playground on Jupiter Blvd. Need this area for car parking [141-143 Jupiter Bvd].
- It's a beach locality
- Jupiter danger. Foot path needs extending
- Keep it all car park, put the skate park somewhere else [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]
- Leave skate park where it is or move next to fish and chips [112 Jupiter Bvd]
- Like all the trees and the plants
- Local artists, great idea or indigenous
- Long term plan should extend walking/bike path to join onto Mad Mile pathway. Currently dangerous with 60k speed, kids, bikes and joggers.
- Long vehicle park
- Love the concept but don;t agree with pelicans. It needs to be

Venus Bay based

- Made Roads Proper Footpaths More Lighting and The Community Centre not the OP SHOP
- Mains sewerage, public toilets for the hundreds of day trippers who presently use the bush around car park 3 as a toilet area and create public health issues .
- Zone pipi gathering to restricted parts of beach to encourage other beach users who wish to enjoy usual beach activities without being surrounded by people digging unsightly holes at low tide.
- Maybe add more seating, park benches, etc
- Maybe add public toilets into the man strip of shops
- Mobile intensive care unit
- Mobile library service at some stage. Grants or funds for workshops to be held at the community centre so things are accessible locally rather than traveling out all the time.
- More car parking i.e.. vacant land on corner of Jupiter and centre roads purchased for car park and is currently being used as such [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]
- More facilities at minor beaches such as No. 3 beach perhaps including showers or toilets

The community said...

- More food options
- More Public Toilets between shops and Beach.
- Immediate upgrade of Public Toilets at the Beach/Surf Club [Beach Number One]
- More seating. More toilet & showers at Beach One. More signage. Fire, beach, pipis, etc.
- More space for pedestrians would be good.
- More street trading to create atmosphere
- More trees
- Need a footpath
- Need markers along the new pathway on Centre road to protect pedestrians
- Need toilet block etc nearer the shops
- Needs a path continued to caravan park
- Needs a small roundabout as its too busy especially for pedestrians trying to cross.
- Nice idea
- No giant pipi please!
- No Not Here [skate park at 141-143 Jupiter Bvd]
- No skate park
- No skate park
- No skate park here [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]
- No skate park here [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]
- No skate park here, redevelop the current facility [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]
- No skate park here [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]. Do not move to Jupiter Park either - too many people leave rubbish.
- No skate park on Jupiter Bvd please put it in its newer form at community centre
- No, dangerous for everyone [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]
- No skate park for Jupiter Bvd, keep it in its current location PLEASE
- Not only is the link poor, it's also not wheelchair friendly
- Not sure this is the best spot but it's a great idea. Important to recognise what is unique about VB
- Nurse clinic at community centre.
- More public toilets and waste management to deal with increased

The community said...

- people.
- Beach parking is also an issue for beaches 2-5 and needs better accommodation and council enforcement.
- Footpaths connecting second estate to first are needed for pedestrian safety
- On 3 days I counted cars over a 1hr period. For every right turn, 8-10 turned left. Traffic counters need to be used to establish patterns [Centre Road]
- More room for existing one? [chess set at 112 Jupiter Bvd] - many people use it while waiting for their fish n chips.
- Parking. Not a skate park on the corner of Jupiter Blvd and Centre Rd [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]
- Pathway continued to Jupiter Bvd so as to cross road at Surf Pde.
- Pathways need to be extended and the existing path up to Beach One needs to be maintained. In regards to the above question I think improved paths along with car parking is the most important
- Pedestrian access is terrible. No footpaths connect. Vegetation on main corner makes crossing dangerous for small kids [Surf Pde]. Give pedestrians right of way.
- Pedestrian crossing here might be a good idea
- Pedestrian priority over vehicles will make vehicles SLOW DOWN, and give pedestrians the right of way...
- Plant native grasses and banksias (similar to Inverloch Main Street)
- Plenty of pedestrian and parking accessibility if done to help businesses and not overtake an area which the council ordered to be done
- Public showers at Beach 1
- Public transport options
- Put skate park at existing park [Jupiter Park]
- Seating in garden area where people can enjoy food
- Create a unique tourist attraction
- Sell blocks owned by Council and find a bigger parcel of land to build better facilities like skate park, tennis courts, basketball courts, off lead dog park
- Signage to slow traffic down in Jupiter Bvd in the side streets also.
- Skate park at back, car park at front [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]
- Skate park at existing park [Jupiter Park]

The community said...

- Skate park in main street is a great idea [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]
- Skate park is a great idea [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]
- Skate park main street [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]. Cobblestone paths near jobs. Fantastic ideas!
- Skate park main street [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]. 2 teen girls who would be thrilled to practice their skills
- Skate park should be at the current park [Jupiter Park]. Facilities already there and “safer”
- Skate park to be at current park as it has required amenities already [Jupiter Park]
- Some traffic calming at this corner [Centre Rd and Jupiter Bvd]
- Sporting facilities - tennis and netball courts etc more public spaces
- Stop allowing blocks to be completely cleared of foliage! It does NOTHING to lessen the potential damage caused by a fire (look at the figures, a clearance has to be over 100m to make ANY difference at all) and is turning VB into suburbia.
- Streetscape needs to be accessible
- That is quite a small area, re develop the skate park in its current location [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]
- The parking is critical and getting worse. Some or all of the area could be used for single day events, as above, during quieter periods [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]
- The entire site should be allocated as a car park. [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]
- The fishing club needs an over haul, so it is a inviting place for youth to partake, meet & store things whilst on the water
- The whole car parking arrangement, outdoor dining and pedestrian movement lines needs to be reassessed and reorganised.
- There is nothing for kids (esp teens) to do in VB besides the beach. A skate park would be perfect - get them off the screens.
- There needs to be more things to create tourist activity in the off season when the business are started to really struggle.
- It would also be great to see more of the foreshore areas used such as a cafe near the Anderson inlet boat jetty, some pop up stalls at the main beach car selling food and drink.
- There should be an area of the beach designated for off lead dogs. Dog owners just ignore the silly laws as they stand, and we'd at least be in one area if Council responded to this need.

The community said...

- There was very little support for a skate park on 19/1/19 at Community consultation day, too close to homes [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]. Parking is needed more.
- This is a post box currently (concept shows trees/ pelicans)
- This is against a prior community finding for the location of a skate park [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]. The whole area should be parking. Market occasionally on part.
- This is the wrong site for the skate park [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]. Land was bought for car park. Put the skate park in the existing park, kids will ride boards there [Jupiter Park].
- This needs high priority due to high rate of pedestrian and vehicle usage
- This should be a marked zebra crossing with flashing lights to ensure right of way given to pedestrians crossing the road.
- This whole site should be parking [141-143 Jupiter Bvd]
- This would be great, lots of day visitors don't know that the no1 beach is patrolled by SLSC, has a toilet, bins, and other beaches don't
- This would be great [public art]. Don't agree with the visual of the pelicans on the drawing though. You don't see pelicans here I don't think?
- Tourist info at Jupiter Park. Toilets already there. Don't need more buildings.
- Town needs to embrace the Pipi culture i.e. yearly weekend festival like the Kilcunda lobster festival , Asian street food market, hawkers
- Town sewerage and mains water.
- Town water system, and a public 25m swimming pool
- Traffic island might work here.
- Transport of some kind needed here (Inverloch and Wonthaggi?)
- Trees along shopping strip would be extremely important project
- Trees, trees, trees, yes please!
- Turn sections of the road into cobbled surface to remind traffic to slow down (re European small towns)
- Venus Bay has the potential to lead the way as being one of the first complete off grid towns since our only connected service is electricity. Here are some community services that would compliment such an idea: • Community veggie garden • Solar grid

The community said...

- system on all houses with back up energy from wind farm? •
- Child care center with attached facility for aged care where we merge young children with the elderly under the guidance of the center. This would address isolation issues with our elderly community, as well as helping to raise our younger community whose parents desperately need some assistance with an increasing number of single parents living here also.
- Bakery and Butcher - ethical locally sourced
- Green grocer - organic locally sourced.
- Area for food van set ups in the busy summer period to assist with demand.
- Extended car parking at ALL beaches with composting toilets at each one.
- Range of interpretive signage panels and sculptures throughout the town educating both locals and visitors about the significance of the environment here and how to care for it - must include language adaptation for Chinese and other Asian visitors.
- Walking track that connects all beaches through the top of the dunes which also has educational signage long the way to help inspire appreciation and protection of our environment - Surf Coast Walk is a good example. <https://www.surfcoastwalk.com.au/>
- Venus Bay is in serious need of a footpath connecting the first estate along Canterbury Road to the town centre
- We have a recreational area 100m down the road
- We have the key elements, the planning just needs to enhance the town experience for its users
- We love this proposal
- We need this! #1 priority for families! MUST DO! [skate park]
- We need transport from Venus Bay to Wonthaggi
- We were told by town planners that the skate park will have low ramps suitable for young children. Upgrade existing one at Community Centre
- What kind of person would propose a skate park in conjunction with a high use car park [141-143 Jupiter Bvd] . Risk management has not been applied. Dead kids ???
- Why a second skate park in VB?
- Why are we being asked to compile a 'wish list' when there is no money for VB anyway
- Why can't the existing skate park be updated and improved?
- Would like a park for eating lunch, fish and chips landscaped with seating here

The community said...

- Yes please! [public art] Local indigenous flora and fauna. Or ocean scape/map similar to awesome one on the side of the General Store.
- You really need to take advantage of the water areas to attract tourists. E.g. with what I was saying in regards to food and drink areas need the beach this could also happen near the Jetty overlooking Anderson's Inlet with some type of cafe/decking area that people can sit at and order food and drink.
- The town also needs a unique identity or attraction that we are known by and that tourists want to come and visit Winter or Summer and take a photo of.
- Zebra crossing on Surf Drive. Pathway to connect crossing road.

References

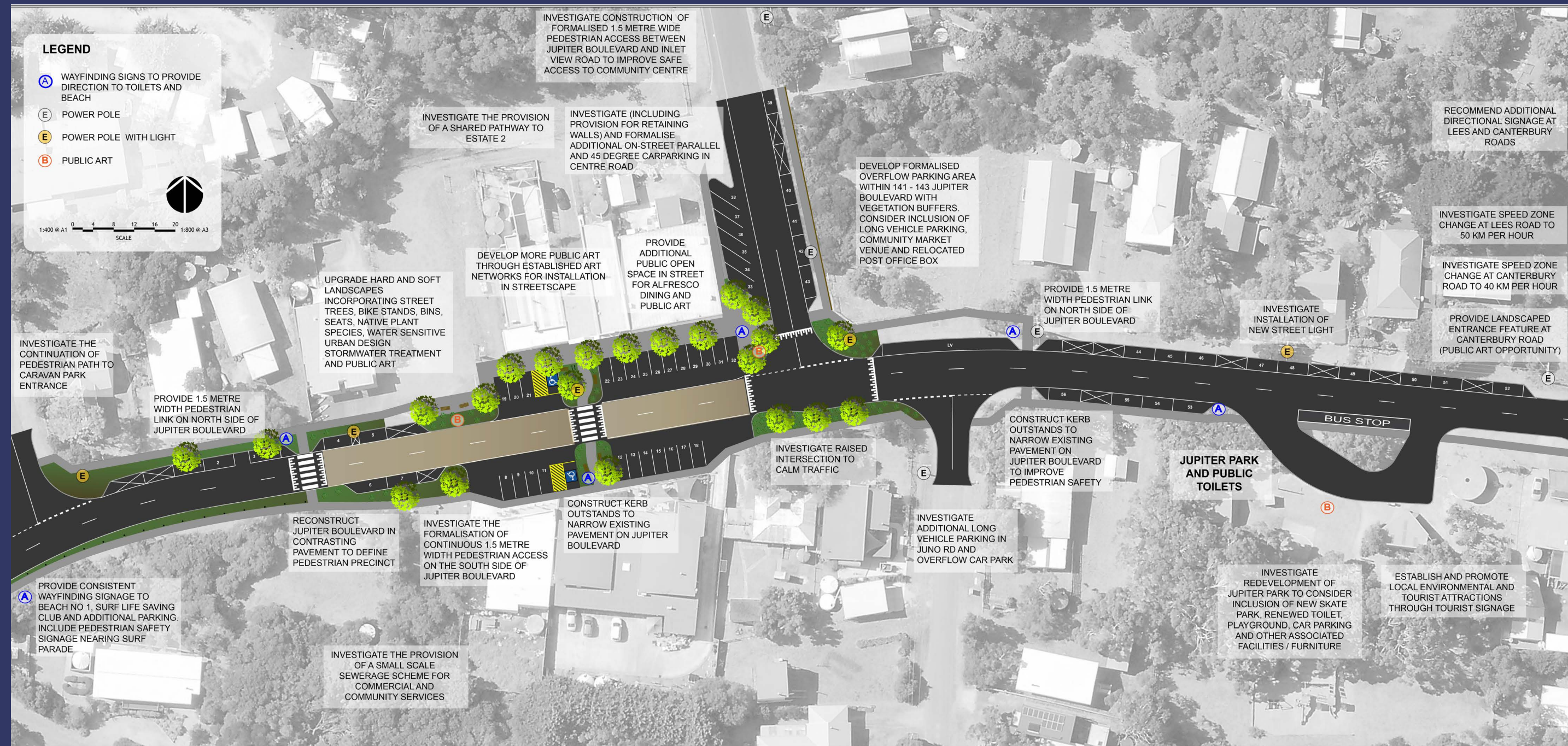
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Appendix 1

Venus Bay Tourism Precinct Streetscape Concept Plan



Appendix 2

Venus Bay Activity Centre Plan Commercial Assessment



Venus Bay Activity Centre Plan

Commercial Assessment

Prepared by Tim Nott

for South Gippsland Shire Council

March 2019

Report Data

Version	Date	Approved By	Sent to
Draft	27 March 2019	TN	Skye Radcliffe-Scott, South Gippsland Shire Council
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Disclaimer

The analysis in this report is intended for the specific purposes of the South Gippsland Shire Council and no responsibility is taken for its use by other parties. The report has relied on secondary sources and the best estimates of the author. The reader should bear in mind that there is no certainty in future predictions.

The views expressed in this report are those of the author and are not necessarily endorsed by any other party.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

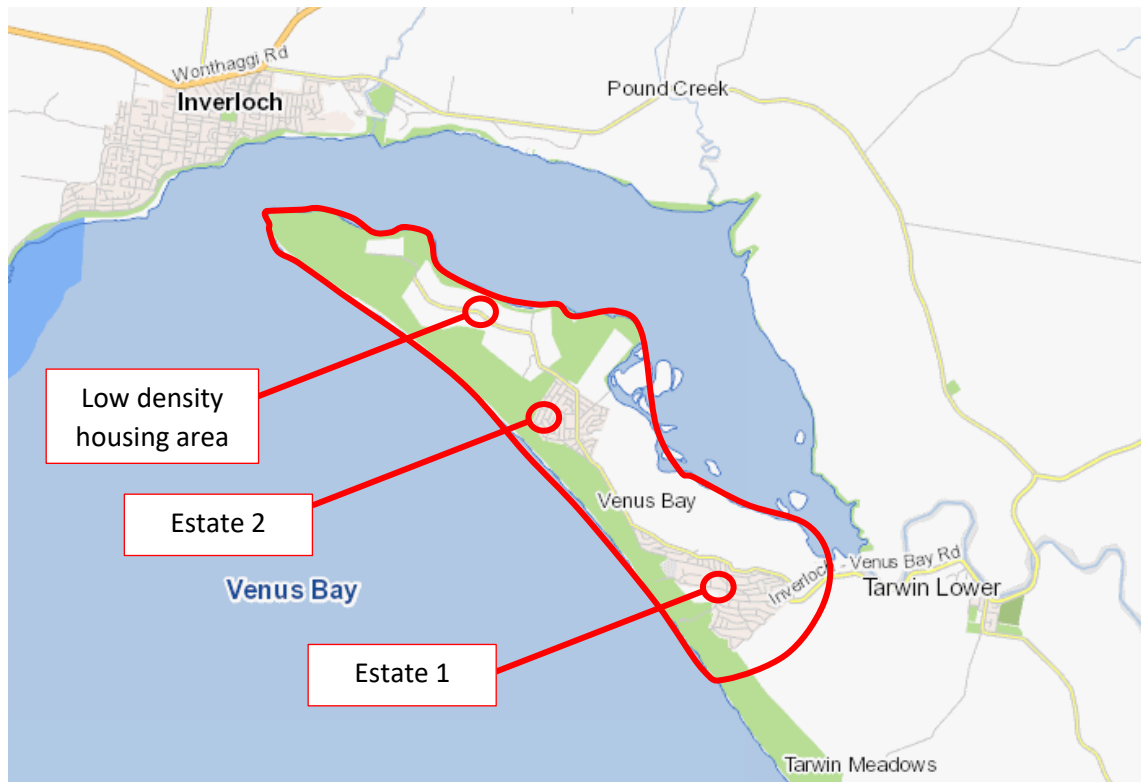
1	Introduction	1
2	Growth in Venus Bay.....	2
2.1	Population.....	2
2.2	Forecast Population Growth	2
2.3	Past Housing Development.....	3
2.4	Housing Scenario.....	4
2.5	Population scenarios.....	5
2.6	Holiday Homes.....	6
2.7	Visitors	8
3	Activity Centres	9
3.1	Activity Centres Serving Venus Bay.....	9
3.2	Venus Bay Local Centre.....	10
3.3	Commercial Land, Estate 2.....	11
4	Demand for Space in Activity Centres	13
4.1	Existing Retail Sales.....	13
4.2	Current Balance of Supply and Demand.....	14
4.3	Scenarios for Market Growth	14
4.4	Non-Retail Activities.....	16
4.5	Total Commercial Floorspace Demand.....	16
4.6	Potential Locations for New Retail and Commercial Services	17
5	Summary and Conclusions.....	19
6	References	1

1 INTRODUCTION

Venus Bay is a holiday township on the South Gippsland Coast. The settlement is split into several estates strung along a peninsula, as shown in the figure below. Local commercial services are provided from a local activity centre in Estate 1. More substantial grocery services are provided at the nearby settlement of Tarwin Lower, which serves a larger area.

The housing stock of the township is growing and has the potential to grow substantially more given the number of vacant allotments – around 790 according to Council records. The South Gippsland Shire Council is currently planning for the potential growth of the commercial services for the area. This report provides advice on the demand for commercial services and the potential expansion of the activity centre in the town as it grows.

Figure 1: Venus Bay



Source: Base map from SGSC

The report is structured in four subsequent sections:

- Section 2 looks at the population and housing potential of the township
- Section 3 describes the activity centres serving Venus Bay
- Section 4 outlines the demand for commercial services in the area and discusses the locations that might best satisfy the demand for those services
- Section 5 provides a summary of findings

Readers wishing for a summary of the report should proceed to section 5.

2 GROWTH IN VENUS BAY

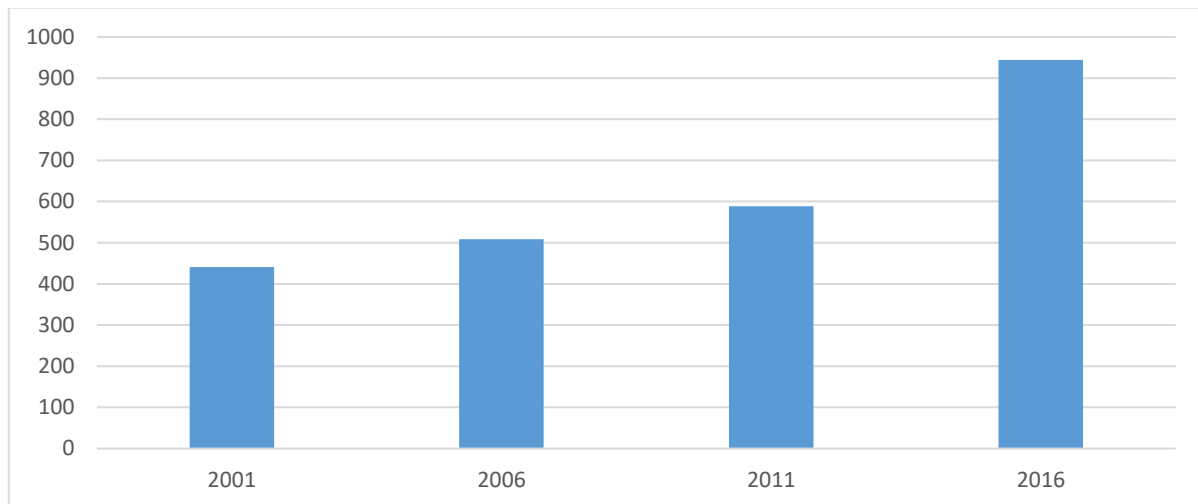
This section looks at the growing markets for commercial services in Venus Bay, including the resident population and the number of visitors.

2.1 Population

The resident population of Venus Bay is estimated for this report at 993 in 2018. This estimate is based on the count of population in the 2016 Census (ABS, 2017), adjusted for undercounting in the Census and projected forward to 2018 based on the growth in the Foster SA2 (ABS, 2018), of which Venus Bay forms a part.

The population growth in the settlement has recently accelerated after many years of quite strong growth. This is shown in the Census population counts.

Figure 2: Census count of population, Venus Bay, 2001 to 2016



Source: ABS, 2017

Between 2001 and 2011, the population grew at around 3% per year, compared with growth in the municipality as a whole of 0.5% per year. However, between 2011 and 2016, growth averaged 9.9% per year, compared with 1% per year in South Gippsland as a whole. This resulted mainly from a growth in the share of dwellings that are occupied by permanent residents rather than used as holiday homes. The share of occupied dwellings went from 18% of the total in 2006 to 23% in 2016.

2.2 Forecast Population Growth

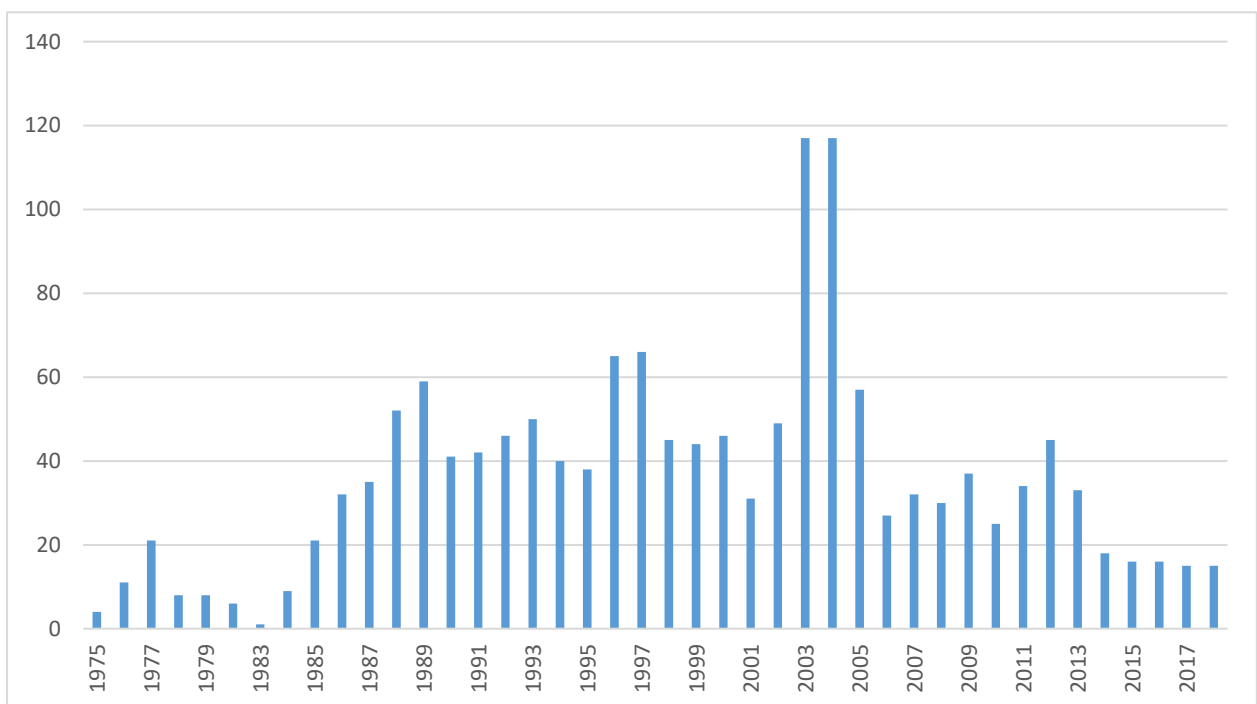
There is no existing population forecast specifically for Venus Bay and so population growth scenarios have been developed for this report which give a range of population outcomes that are consistent with existing trends and wider forecasts. In constructing growth scenarios, it is common to hold one factor constant and vary other factors to highlight the consequences of particular trends or policy decisions. In this instance, the growth in the number of houses constructed in Venus Bay is held constant; the variation in population between high and low growth scenarios arises as a result of differences in the share of dwellings that are occupied by permanent residents or occupied as holiday homes.

The growth scenarios draw on a variety of sources, including data on recent population and housing growth as well as existing forecasts of population and housing that have been completed for Council by .id consulting (2018).

2.3 Past Housing Development

At the time of the Census in 2016, the number of dwellings in Venus Bay was 1,474. Council records show the number of new dwellings that have been granted an occupancy permit over the period since 1975, as detailed in the chart below.

Figure 3: Number of dwelling occupancy certificates by year, Venus Bay, 1975 to 2018



Source: unpublished Council records

The figures show that 2003 and 2004 were the high point for housing development in Venus Bay, with a declining trend since then. It appears that a consistent, relatively low level of development has emerged over the last four years.

Development in the township is affected by the lack of reticulated water and sewerage and the absence of higher order community and commercial services. Expansion of the township beyond existing boundaries is subject to land-use planning restrictions which recognise that the land surrounding the township is subject to flooding or has a high bushfire risk.

Venus Bay has no shortage of land to develop, with 790 currently vacant lots according to Council records; so the slow-down in growth is not the result of a lack of supply. Two factors may be influencing the declining level of development in Venus Bay. Firstly, those lots that are easy to develop may have been developed, leaving lots that are more expensive to develop or which are

unattractive in other ways. Secondly, there may be a declining appetite in the general community for investment in holiday homes in places that lack services, where there is a perceived fire risk (with only one road in and out of the township) and where flooding may threaten access if not the homes themselves.

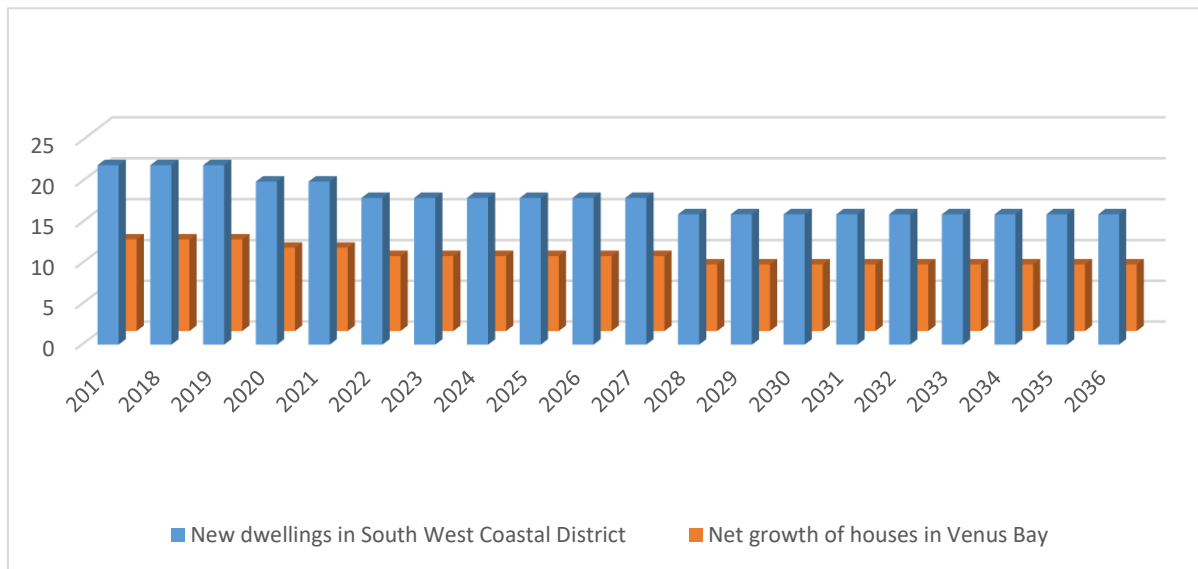
In any case, looking at the recent number of dwellings constructed in Venus Bay and wider forecasts for housing development provides the basis for a scenario for new houses in the township.

2.4 Housing Scenario

Figure 3 shows the number of dwelling occupancy certificates granted in Venus Bay in 2017 and 2018 was 15 per year. However, some of the dwellings were replacements or major renovations in existing houses. A review sample suggests that only 75% of the dwellings were built on vacant lots, so the net addition to the dwelling stock was approximately 11 in each year.

Council’s demographic forecaster, .id consulting, has provided a forecast of dwelling growth in the wider South West Coastal District. In 2017 and 2018, the forecast is for an additional 22 dwellings per year for the district as a whole (and Council’s dwelling occupancy figures for the wider area appear to support this forecast). Venus Bay appears, therefore, to have accommodated 50% of the total for the district in those two years. The following chart shows the annual growth in the number of dwellings in Venus Bay assuming the township continues to accommodate half of forecast new dwellings in the district as a whole.

Figure 4: Forecast dwelling numbers in South West Coastal District and Venus Bay, 2016 to 2036



Source: .id consulting, 2018; Tim Nott

This scenario shows net growth of 161 dwellings in Venus Bay over the period 2018 to 2036, an average of 9 per year. The scenario is for a slowly declining rate of development over the period. The forecast demand for 161 new dwellings would not require any new subdivision since the existing stock of vacant lots number 790, according to Council records.

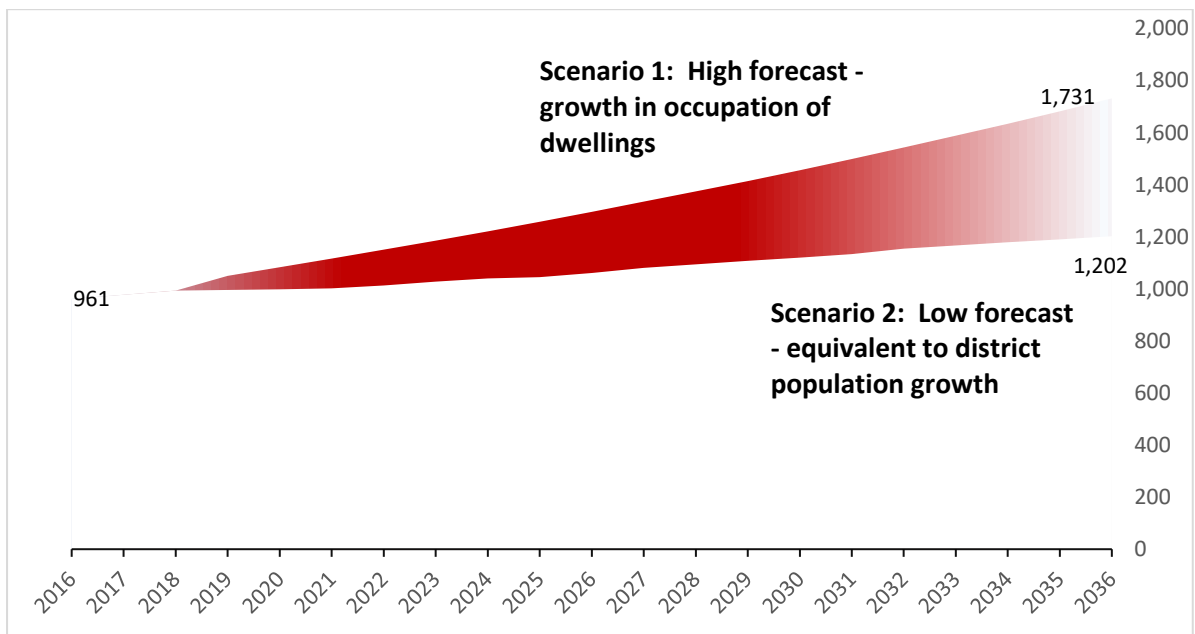
2.5 Population scenarios

In the following population scenarios, the number of additional dwellings is the same. The difference arises because of differences in the share of dwellings that are occupied by permanent residents.

- Scenario 1:** is a high growth scenario which assumes that a steadily increasing share of houses in Venus Bay will be occupied by residents rather than be holiday homes. The share of permanently occupied dwellings is assumed to grow at 2.4% per year as it has done over the period 2006 to 2016, according to the Census records. This results in a population of 1,731 by 2036, growing at an average rate of 3.1% per year over the period 2018 to 2036. This is in line with rates of growth over the period 2001 to 2011; the scenario assumes that the most recent growth of nearly 10% per year has been anomalous.
- Scenario 2:** is a low growth scenario which assumes that Venus Bay will accommodate all the growth forecast by .id consulting for the South West Coastal District. This results in a population of 1,202 by 2036, growing at an average rate of 1.1% per year over the period 2018 to 2036. This is much lower than the rate over the past 15 years. This population scenario is consistent with the forecast for the broader area, although it assumes that areas of the South West Coastal district outside Venus Bay will not grow at all.

The results of these two scenarios are shown in the chart below.

Figure 5: Population scenarios, Venus Bay, 2016 to 2036



Source: Tim Nott

There are endless possible variations to these scenarios. For example, if the population of Venus Bay continued to grow at 9.9% as it did between the last two Censuses, then by 2036 it would be over 6,000 people. This seems an unlikely outcome given the capacity of existing services and would

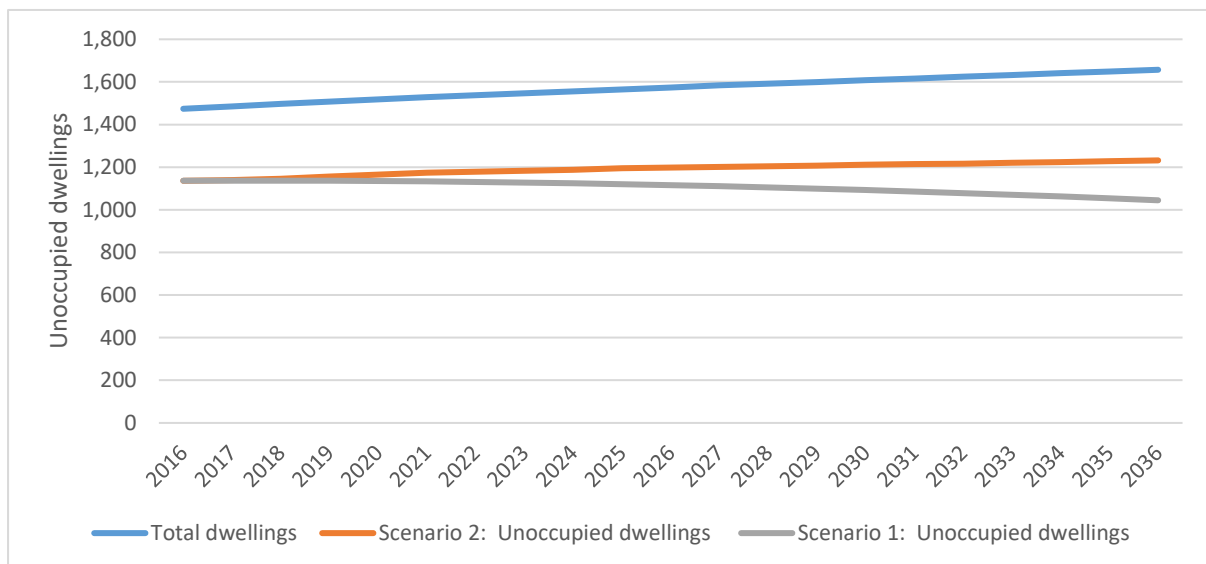
require a major rethink of the planning strategy for the area. At the other extreme, the population of the South West Coastal district, as defined by .id consulting, is forecast to grow at only 0.4% per year. If this growth rate applied to Venus Bay, the population would be only 1,065, 72 more than at present.

Given the identified trends and the collective experience of population growth in Victorian coastal settlements over recent decades¹, the population outcomes depicted in the scenarios seem reasonable bounds.

2.6 Holiday Homes

The population scenarios outlined above have different implications for the level of resident occupation. The chart below shows the corresponding number of unoccupied dwellings.

Figure 6: Number of unoccupied dwellings corresponding to population growth scenarios, Venus Bay, 2016 to 2036



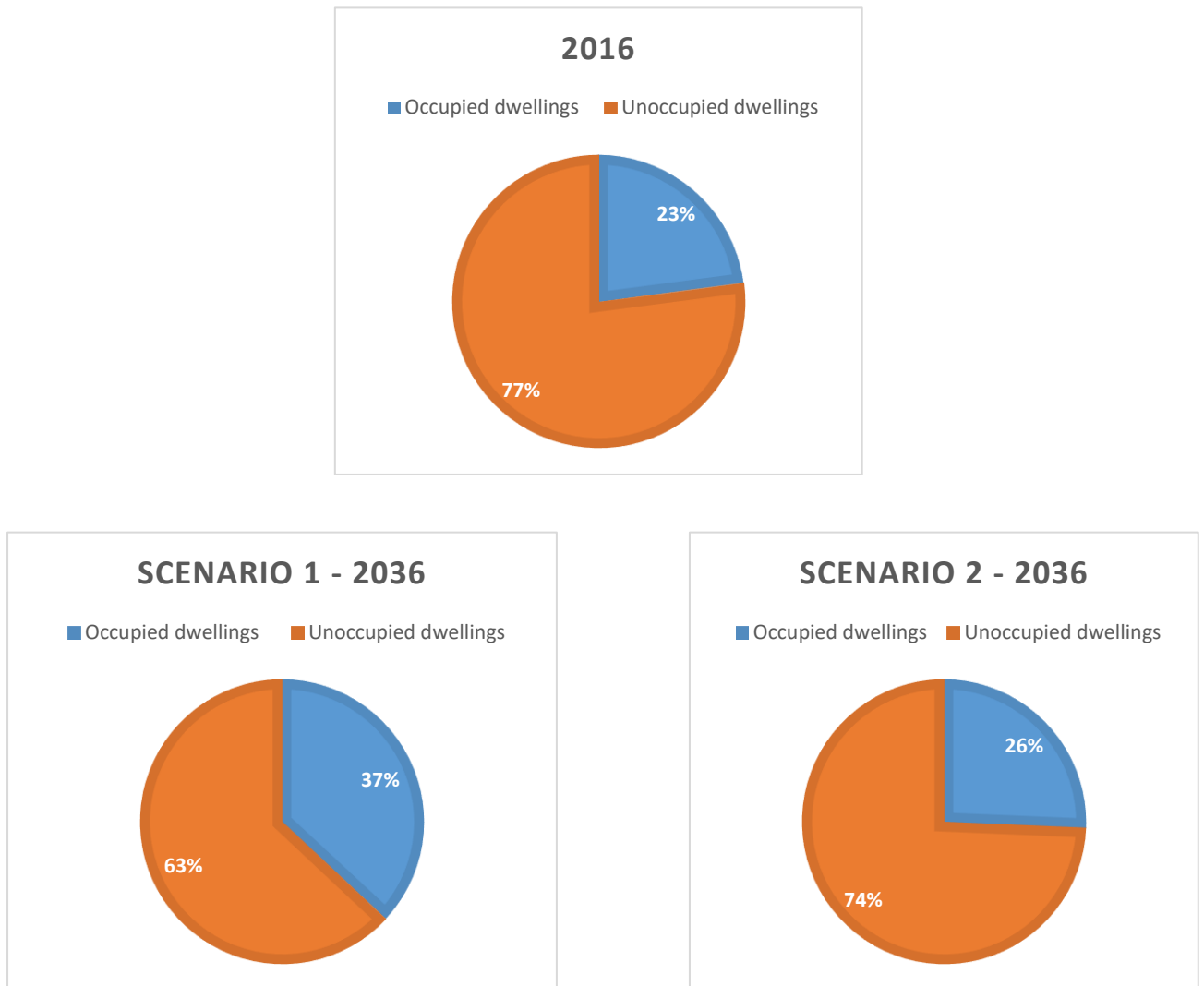
Source: Tim Nott

Most of the unoccupied dwellings are holiday homes but some are occupied on a part-time basis by people whose main residence is elsewhere. These could be people who are in transition to retirement or who wish to split their time between town and country.

The charts below show the differences in occupied and unoccupied dwellings for the two scenarios.

¹ The following population growth rates were experienced in nearby coastal settlements between 2006 and 2016 according to the Census of Population and Housing: Inverloch – 3% per year; Cape Paterson – 2% per year; Port Albert – 0% per year; Corinella – 3% per year; Cowes – 1% per year; San Remo – 2% per year.

Figure 7: Change in the share of occupied and unoccupied dwellings, Venus Bay, 2016 to 2036



Source: Tim Nott

Under the high population growth scenario, the number of dwellings available for holiday or temporary occupation declines from 1,137 in 2018 to 1,045 in 2036; this represents a decline from 77% of the total dwelling stock being unoccupied to 63%. Under the low population growth scenario, unoccupied dwellings rise from 1,145 to 1,232, and the share of unoccupied dwellings has a more modest decline from 77% to 74%.

Again, many different scenarios could be envisaged. For example, there is a possibility that higher demand from residents would also lead to higher demand from overnight visitors – a general rising tide of popularity for the township. In that case, the development of housing may exceed the scenarios outlined here.

2.7 Visitors

Visitors are attracted to Venus Bay because of its unique and isolated seaside location, the coastal park and beaches and the availability of holiday homes. Visitors include people staying in holiday houses, caravans or tents and day trippers. They also include people whose main house is elsewhere but who are part-time residents. Whilst most visitors are from Melbourne and the Latrobe Valley, the township does get some international visitors – often people making their way along the coast between Melbourne and Sydney.

There are no current estimates of visitation just for Venus Bay. However, based on recent research on South Gippsland Shire as a whole by Tourism Research Australia (2017), the following table provides an estimate of visitor numbers who travel to Venus Bay in 2016.

Table 1: Broad estimate of visitation to Venus Bay, 2016

	Visitors	Average stay (nights)	Visitor nights
Domestic overnight visitors	81,070	2.8	228,675
International visitors	4,539	6.4	28,970
Day visitors	44,567		
Total visitors	130,176		257,645

Source: Tim Nott; Tourism Research Australia, 2017

The table estimates that in 2016, Venus Bay had approximately :

- 130,000 visitors
- 258,000 visitor nights

Tourism Research Australia (2018) has made the following forecast for growth in visitation in regional Victoria:

- International visitor nights to Regional Victoria, 2016/17 to 2026/27 will grow at 6.3% per year on average
- Domestic visitor nights to Regional Victoria, 2016/17 to 2026/27 will grow at 1.8% per year on average

Whether or not this kind of growth can be accommodated in Venus Bay will depend largely on the rate of housing construction and on the extent to which former holiday homes are occupied by permanent residents.

3.2 Venus Bay Local Centre

The existing Venus Bay local centre is on Jupiter Boulevard in Estate 1 and contains activities which are typical of a small beachside holiday destination with eating establishments, beachwear, real estate services and a general store with a limited range of day-to-day groceries. The centre includes no community service activities, which are provided elsewhere in the township.

Figure 9: Aerial view of Venus Bay local centre



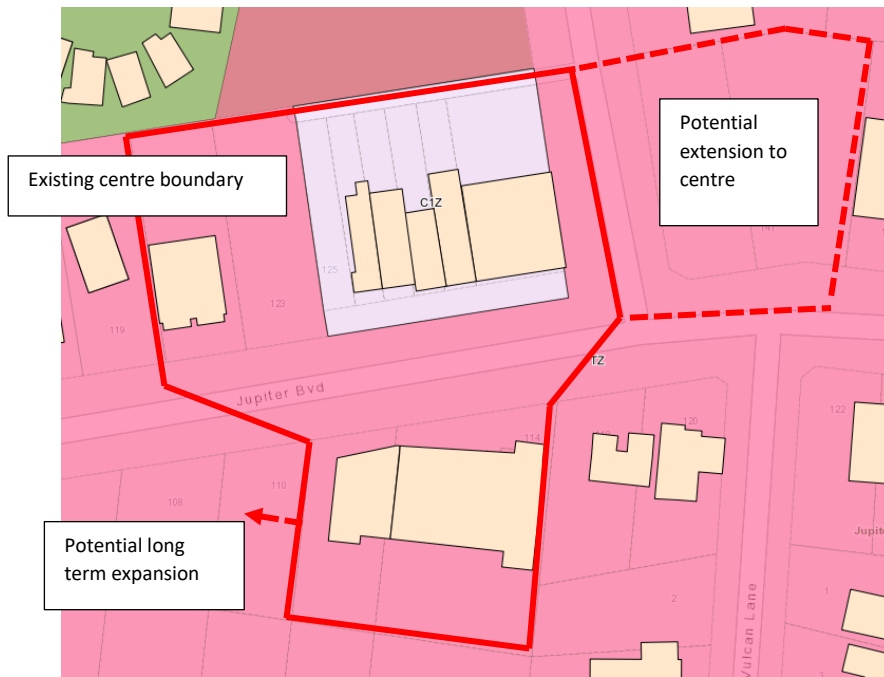
Source: Google maps

The centre has two vacant parcels of land totalling around 990 sqm. Because of the lack of sewerage in the township, development of these parcels requires an extensive area for on-site waste water disposal. This makes the land difficult to develop at present. There may be a case for the construction of a small scale treatment plant that could treat and disperse the waste water load from the various non-residential activities in this general vicinity including the commercial centre. This would ease the restrictions on new commercial building development.

The centre is in two different land-use zones as shown in the diagram below. The original group of shops has been zoned Commercial 1; the remainder of the centre is in the Township Zone. A recommended action in the Planning Scheme (see clause 21.15-9) is to consider consolidating the existing commercial activity into a single Commercial Zone.

Council is also considering the extension of the centre to the east, to include two further Council-owned vacant lots (141-143 Jupiter Boulevard) that may be used in the short-medium term for car-parking. These two lots total around 1,822 sqm. In addition, there may be the potential to extend the centre to include vacant lots on the south side of Jupiter Boulevard to the west. The first of these allotments – number 110 – is 569 sqm.

Figure 10: Zoning plan, Venus Bay local centre



Source: South Gippsland Shire Council

The centre contains around 1,900 sqm of floorspace, including 1,600 sqm of retailing, as shown in the table below.

Table 2: Estimate of retail and commercial floorspace, Venus Bay local centre

	Activity floorspace	
	sqm	%
Food and groceries	300	16%
Non-food goods	250	13%
Cafés, restaurants and take-away food	946	51%
Retail services	60	3%
Total retail	1,556	84%
Other commercial services	192	10%
Vacant	108	6%
Total floorspace	1,856	100%

Source: Tim Nott, survey March 2019

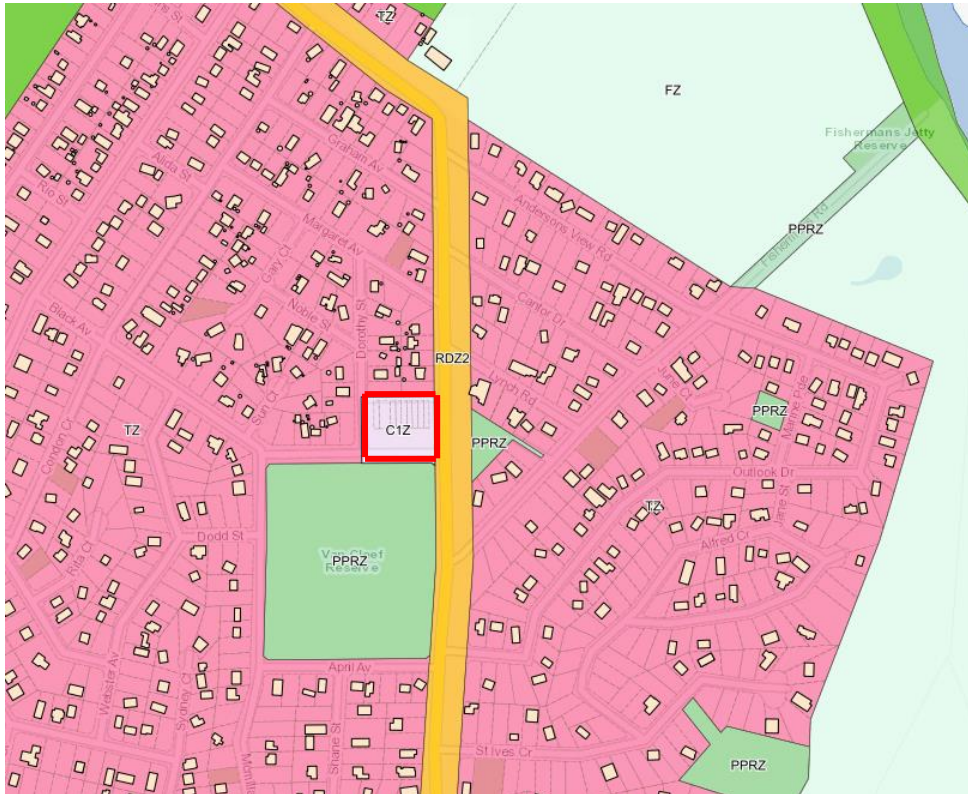
The single vacant shop unit has recently been let and is in the process of being occupied according to a local real estate agent.

3.3 Commercial Land, Estate 2

In addition to the existing local activity centre in Estate 1, Estate 2 also has a parcel of land zoned Commercial 1, put in place during the original subdivision planning to accommodate a small group of

shops to provide local services. The site on Black Avenue is approximately 4,000 sqm and is split into lots as small as 185 sqm.

Figure 11: Commercial land, Estate 2 Venus Bay



Source: South Gippsland Shire Council

This site has not yet been developed and lots would need to be consolidated in order to meet the need for on-site waste water disposal. Amendment C90 to the South Gippsland Planning Scheme proposes to require consolidation of these lots for development to proceed. This is in part because the lots are too small to treat and contain wastewater onsite without consolidation. Amendment C90 SGSC also includes a change of the Commercial 1 Zone to Township Zone. This is designed to ensure that the activity centre at Jupiter Boulevard remains the main focus for commercial development, although the Township Zone can still provide for commercial developments if required.

4 DEMAND FOR SPACE IN ACTIVITY CENTRES

This section of the report looks at the demand for space in activity centres in Venus Bay. It concentrates on retail demand, since retailing is the largest single activity in smaller activity centres. An allowance for expansion of non-retail activity is made subsequently. This section examines:

- The existing retail sales in the centre
- Current balance of supply and demand, including visitor spending
- Assumptions about future retail demand and supply
- Scenarios for future retail demand

4.1 Existing Retail Sales

The estimated retail sales in Venus Bay in 2018 were \$4.1 million. This is based on figures from Spendmapp² (Geografia, 2019).

Figure 12: Estimated retail sales, Venus Bay, 2018

	Spending \$m	Floorspace sqm	Spending per sqm \$/sqm
Retail goods and services	\$4.1	1,600	\$2,700

Source: Geografia, 2019; Tim Nott

Note: While sales have been calculated for four retail categories, the results have been combined to protect the confidentiality of the local operators.

The estimated sales per square metre, at \$2,700, is low, even for a small local centre without a substantial food and grocery offering. A more usual figure for sales per square metre for a local centre would be in the range \$4,000 to \$6,000. The low figure in Venus Bay reflects the highly seasonal nature of visitation to the township. This is shown in the example below, with clear expenditure peaks in the Summer holidays. The monthly spending on dining and entertainment was nearly seven times more in the highest month - January 2018 - than in the lowest - May 2018.

Figure 13: Dining and entertainment expenditure times series for Venus Bay, Aug 2017 to Jan 2019



Source: Geografia, 2019

² Spendmapp data is based on an analysis of credit and debit card spending and extrapolation to take account of other forms of spending. It provides information about where resident spending is undertaken and how much local spending is undertaken by visitors to an area and where they come from. The expenditure categories are slightly different from other data-sets commonly used in retail analysis such as spend-info which uses the ABS Household Expenditure Survey as a base. These data sets should not be compared directly.

This seasonality does provide a challenge to the operation of year-round businesses. It also indicates that there is likely to be capacity for the local businesses to accommodate higher levels of expenditure without growing in floorspace. This could be achieved, for example, with a growth in year-round residents or international visitors, who tend to visit Australia all year round.

4.2 Current Balance of Supply and Demand

The table below provides an estimate of the current flows of retail expenditure in and out of Venus Bay.

Table 3: Resident and visitor spending, Venus Bay, 2018

Item	
Total resident spending (\$m)	\$13.1
Local spending by residents (\$m)	\$1.0
Escape spending (\$m)	\$12.2
Escape spending as share of total spending	92%
Spending by non-residents (\$m)	\$3.2
Visitor share of local spending	76%

Source: Geografia, 2019

Note: rounding errors may be apparent

Escape spending, that is, spending by local residents of Venus Bay at retail outlets outside the township (including online spending), is \$12.2 million or 92% of all resident retail spending. This is high but to be expected given the lack of retail provision in the existing centre at Venus Bay. Around \$1.5 million of this spending flows to nearby Tarwin Lower which has the closest supermarket. Much of the rest flows to the larger centres of the region – Wonthaggi, Leongatha and Traralgon – and then to the regional shopping centres in Melbourne and the Melbourne CBD.

Theoretically, provision of more and different retailers in Venus Bay would reduce escape spending, keeping services and employment local. However, there needs to be a sufficient market to attract investment in the provision of particular retail goods and services.

4.3 Scenarios for Market Growth

Modelling has been undertaken for this report to assess the potential for growth in retail floorspace. The modelling has made a series of conservative assumptions³ as follows:

- Growth in resident population is as provided in the earlier scenarios shown in section 2.5
- Growth in the number of holiday homes is as shown in section 2.6
- Holiday homes are occupied, on average, 24%⁴ of the time by households which are the average size for Victoria as a whole (2.6 persons per household) and this allows the

³ Conservative in that existing conditions and trends are assumed to prevail.

⁴ This is calculated by assuming that the dwellings will be fully occupied during peak holiday periods and making an allowance for occupation at other times of the year.

calculation of the number of visitor nights, starting at 257,645 in 2016 as per the estimate in Table 1

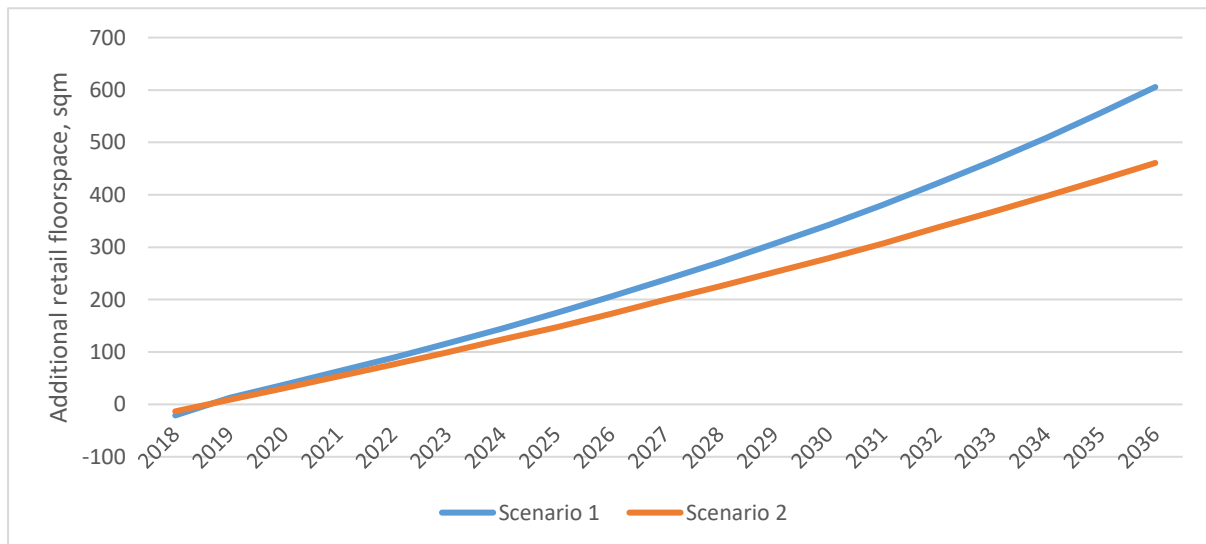
- The retail spending per visitor night by overnight visitors in Venus Bay is estimated at \$10.75 (calculated from Spendmapp visitor spending and the number of overnight visitors and their estimated spending from the National Visitors Survey); and this level of spending per visitor night is expected to continue throughout the period
- Day visitors grow at 1.8% per year – the same as the expected growth of domestic overnight visitors, with retail spending of day visitors to Venus Bay estimated at \$8.71 per person, held steady for the forecast period
- Sales per square metre of floorspace remain the same as at present.

An assumption has been made that resident retail spending retained in Venus Bay will rise from 8% of the total in 2018 to 12% by 2036. It seems likely that as the resident population grows, there will be sufficient demand for the provision of more local retail goods and services.

Various factors may shift the growth scenarios up or down. Factors that may reduce the growth in retail floorspace include a growth in retail sales per square metre as a result of improvements in seasonality. Factors that may increase the growth in retail floorspace include growth in real spending per person or per visit. It has been customary to allow such a growth in retail analysis. However, the retail industry is in a period of adjustment, and it seems more likely that any growth in spending per person would be directed to online sales rather than bricks and mortar shops requiring new floorspace.

The results for two main scenarios are shown in the following chart.

Figure 14: Scenarios for retail growth, Venus Bay, 2018 to 2036



Source: Tim Nott

The high population growth Scenario 1 has a demand for an additional 610 sqm of retail space over the period to 2036. The lower population growth Scenario 2 has a demand for an additional 460 sqm of retail space. In fact, there is little difference in retail outcome between the two housing

scenarios. The higher resident population of Scenario 1 means that there are fewer visitors; the lower resident population of Scenario 2 provides room for higher visitor growth.

The additional floorspace would likely be used to provide additional resident services – a larger food and grocery provision, for example – as well as additional visitor services including more dining outlets, beach-wear and souvenirs.

4.4 Non-Retail Activities

Non-retail activities that commonly locate in small activity centres include:

- Real estate offices
- Medical and allied health services
- Other professional services
- Hotels and clubs
- Gyms
- Emergency services
- Community services, churches and halls

Presently, these kinds of activities are provided at Tarwin Lower and larger centres serving the Venus Bay community. The township does have a community centre that is located on Canterbury Road, outside the centre.

The current level of non-retail space is 10% of the total in the centre. In a range of 47 other local centres that have been assessed by this consultant, non-retail space occupies, on average, 46% of the total. However, for holiday towns, non-retail space is typically lower than average. The centres are there principally to provide retail goods and dining options for the visitors.

In the future, there may be some further demand for non-retail activity at the Jupiter Boulevard centre but this is likely to be limited. For planning purposes, an allowance of 15% of the total additional space has been made.

No allowance has been made for residential development in the activity centre such as apartments over the shop units. However, this may be a real possibility judging by developments in other seaside activity centres and in discussions with local real estate agents. Such developments could be positive for the centre, adding to the vibrancy and demand, providing the waste-water issues can be resolved.

4.5 Total Commercial Floorspace Demand

Given the scenarios outlined here, and the lack of sewerage and the other limitations on the township's development, it seems unlikely that retail demand in Venus Bay will exceed 700 sqm over the period to 2036. On this basis, the following table provides an estimate of total space demand.

Table 4: Demand for additional commercial floorspace and land, Venus Bay, 2018 to 2036

Item	
Additional retail floorspace sqm	700
Non-retail floorspace share of total	15%
Additional non-retail floorspace sqm	120
Total additional floorspace sqm	820
Car parking requirement per 100 sqm	3.5
Number of car parks	29
Land for car-parking sqm (@35sqm per space)	1,005
Total land for building and car-parking sqm	1,825

Source: Tim Nott

Note: Car parking requirement is an average for likely activities and is taken from the Planning Scheme. The land for car-parking is sufficient for the additional floorspace. No assessment has been undertaken of the adequacy of car parking for the existing activities.

This calculation assumes that the activities will all be at ground level. It may be possible that some of the non-retail space could be above the shops. This would reduce the land requirement by 120sqm at most. A more significant reduction in the space required would be obtained by a reduction in the car-parking requirement, which is at Council's discretion. For example, a reduction in the requirement from 3.5 to 2 spaces per 100 sqm would reduce the space for car-parking from 1,005 sqm to 574 sqm. This level of car-parking is likely to prove sufficient for most of the year and could be acceptable to the community if:

- Pavements are in place to encourage safe walking to the centre
- Bike lanes and bike parking are provided
- Community transport options are available

4.6 Potential Locations for New Retail and Commercial Services

The land required to extend the activity centre in Venus Bay over the period to 2036 is likely to be no more than 1,800 sqm for building and car-parking, assuming the waste water disposal can be undertaken off-site. This area of land could be found in the vacant parcels already in the centre (989 sqm) and in the Council-owned parcel at 141-143 Jupiter Boulevard (1,822 sqm). The boundaries of the Commercial 1 Zone for the centre should be extended to cover the existing centre and the adjoining vacant land. The proposed centre boundaries are shown in the figure below.

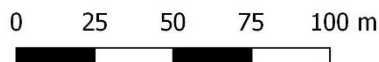
Figure 15: Proposed expansion of the Jupiter Boulevard local centre, Venus Bay



Legend

- Commercial Precinct Current
- Current C1Z Area
- Commercial Precinct Proposed
- Propose Zone Change TZ to C1Z

Venus Bay Commercial Precinct



Source: South Gippsland Shire Council

It would also be possible to divert some of the retail floorspace demand to Black Avenue in Estate 2. This could take the form of a general store or café of perhaps 100-200 sqm or so. This may be necessary if off-site waste water disposal cannot be provided to the Commercial land at Jupiter Boulevard; and, in any case, would deliver an improved service to the residents and visitors at Estate 2, providing a café/retail outlet and meeting place within walking distance of local homes.

The viability of a retail outlet at Estate 2 may be some years away as the resident population in the area builds up. In the meantime, there may be potential to provide a high season mobile café/retail outlet. Such a service could be located at Fisherman’s Jetty Reserve which is the main boat launching facility from Venus Bay. This visitor node already has extensive trailer parking, children’s playground, bird hide and clubrooms. A high season coffee cart or similar outlet would complement these existing services.

5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

1. **Venus Bay is a holiday township** on the South Gippsland Coast. The South Gippsland Shire Council is currently planning for the potential growth of the commercial services for the area. This report provides advice on the demand for commercial services and the potential expansion of the activity centre in the town as it grows.
2. The **resident population** of Venus Bay is estimated for this report at 993 in 2018. These residents lived in around 360 houses. A further 1,140 houses were unoccupied. These are mainly holiday homes or occupied part time by people who have permanent residences elsewhere.
3. Two scenarios for future population growth have been prepared for this report.
 - **Scenario 1:** is a high growth scenario which assumes that a steadily increasing share of houses in Venus Bay will be occupied by residents rather than be holiday homes. The share of permanently occupied dwellings is assumed to grow at 2.4% per year as it has done over the period 2006 to 2016, according to the Census records. This results in a population of 1,731 by 2036, growing at an average rate of 3.1% per year over the period 2018 to 2036. This is in line with rates of growth over the period 2001 to 2011; the scenario assumes that the most recent growth of nearly 10% per year has been anomalous.
 - **Scenario 2:** is a low growth scenario which assumes that Venus Bay will accommodate all the growth forecast by .id consulting for the South West Coastal District. This results in a population of 1,202 by 2036, growing at an average rate of 1.1% per year over the period 2018 to 2036. This is much lower than the rate over the past 15 years. This population scenario is consistent with the forecast for the broader area, although it assumes that areas of the South West Coastal district outside Venus Bay will not grow at all.
4. Under both scenarios, **Venus Bay is expected to accommodate half the houses forecast for the wider district. This amounts to 161 additional dwellings** over the period 2018 to 2036, an average of 9 per year. Under scenario 1, the number of unoccupied dwellings falls as residents occupy some dwellings that were formerly holiday homes. Under scenario 2, the number of unoccupied dwellings continues to rise, although their share of the total falls slightly.
5. Venus Bay is **served by a hierarchy of activity centres** located throughout the region. The nearest supermarket is 4km away at Tarwin Lower. Venus Bay itself has only a local centre at Jupiter Boulevard which accommodates a general store, a chemist, a variety of dining establishments, beachwear, hairdressing and real estate services. There is a total of 1,900 sqm of activity space at the centre, including 1,600 sqm of retail space. One shop unit that was vacant at the time of survey has since been let according to local agents.
6. **Annual retail sales at the Jupiter Boulevard centre are estimated at \$4.1 million.** \$1 million of this is estimated to be derived from local residents, with the remaining \$3.1 million (76% of the total) coming from visitors. Total sales are rather low for the level of retail floorspace in comparison with other activity centres. This is mainly because of the highly seasonal nature of visitation to Venus Bay, which presents challenges to the viability of shops in the township.

7. **Retail spending by local residents totals \$13.1 million per year (2018).** This means that escape spending – retail spending undertaken by residents in shops outside Venus Bay – is around 92%. This is understandable given the limited range of retailing available locally. As the population grows, there may be scope to reduce escape expenditure as local residents demand more local services.
8. Estimates of demand for additional floorspace have been developed based on the population and housing scenarios outlined earlier. Overall, it seems **unlikely that demand for additional retail and commercial floorspace in Venus Bay will exceed 820 sqm over the period to 2036.** For planning purposes, an allowance of 1,800 sqm of land for commercial buildings and associated car-parking should be made. This area could be smaller if Council were to reduce its car-parking requirement for commercial development in the area. Such a reduction would be more palatable given more encouragement for active transport – footpaths and bike lanes, for example - and provision of community transport for the area. This additional land area does not include an allowance for housing such as apartments over shop units, although this could be a positive outcome for the centre.
9. Currently, because there is no reticulated sewerage, **waste water treatment must be undertaken on site.** This presents difficulties for commercial development, especially on smaller sites. The existing centre at Jupiter Boulevard has vacant land of 989 sqm in two lots within the boundaries of the centre as well as a Council-owned vacant parcel of 1,822 sqm adjacent to the centre at 141-143 Jupiter Boulevard which has been earmarked for a car-park. **The provision of 820 sqm of additional commercial space might be accommodated on these sites,** although new building would be easier on the larger Council-owned site where waste water could be treated more easily. Council is considering the development of a small waste water treatment system for the non-residential activities in this general area of the township. Such a facility would resolve the current difficulty of commercial development on small sites and allow the vacant land at the centre to reach its potential.
10. Currently, part of the centre at Jupiter Boulevard is covered by a Commercial 1 Zone and part by the Township Zone. There is a recommendation in the Planning Scheme that the boundaries of Commercial 1 Zone should be reviewed. In order to ensure ease of development, and to prevent land in the centre from being occupied by dwellings, it would be **prudent to expand the Commercial 1 Zone to cover all the existing commercial activity and the intervening vacant land as well as vacant land at 141-143 Jupiter Boulevard and 110 Jupiter Boulevard.**
11. There is a small Commercial 1 Zone at Black Avenue around 4km from the centre at Jupiter Boulevard. This land of 4,000 sqm was designated to provide a local retail service to the occupants of Estate 2 but remains vacant. Some of the **demand for retail floorspace in Venus Bay could be located on this site, in the form of a café or general store.** This would have the benefit of providing a local service and meeting place within walking distance of many of the occupants of Estate 2 and reducing the need for those occupants to drive to Jupiter Boulevard. There is an Amendment on foot to rezone this land to Township Zone. Even if this were successful, the Township Zone would allow the development of commercial development on the site, although the opportunity would be lost if the land were developed for housing. In the meantime, **a coffee cart or mobile shop could service this general area during the high season.** The activity node at Fishermans Jetty Reserve would be an appropriate location.

6 REFERENCES

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