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C92**KEY INFLUENCES AND ISSUES**

- The *Melbourne 2030* policies of containment will result in the land price differential between metropolitan and regional areas widening to the advantage of regional centres.
- The challenge in Greater Shepparton is to diversify and broaden its economic base in a manner that builds onto the inherent strength in primary production and processing, in a way that reduces wide spread vulnerability.
- The application of technology and advanced materials to the local economy should be pursued as the vehicle to build the municipality's changing industrial future.
- Land use strategies that provide for growth should be pursued whilst also protecting the quality of agricultural land and encouraging the sustainable use of natural resources such as land, water, air and biodiversity.
- Coordinated management of catchments by catchment management authorities, river and wetland systems and irrigated agricultural systems will provide for greater care and responsibility toward the natural environment and sustainability of agricultural practices.
- Certainty of water rights and inter-regional distribution of the water resources in the state for urban, agriculture and environmental uses.
- Agriculture is a significant land use in the municipality and underpins the local economy directly through on farm employment and through the associated manufacturing and food processing and industries servicing agriculture.
- Horticulture is the most significant agricultural industry in terms of gross value of agricultural production. Horticulture and the dairy industry is dependent on access to a secure water supply via the irrigation network. Land use planning control needs to protect the main production irrigated areas to secure their future for farming but also integrate with the planned modernisation and reconfiguration of the systems and potential expansion into the agricultural development areas.
- Farm businesses generally need to grow and expand over time. Access to affordable land unencumbered by unnecessary infrastructure is essential to provide the opportunity for farm growth.
- Horticultural production, and to a lesser extent dairy, requires soils with high suitability for irrigation, particularly excellent drainage and low salinity. Greater Shepparton has areas of Class 1 soil and Class 2 soil (highly suitable for irrigation), some of which is in close proximity to urban development around Shepparton, Ardmona and Mooroopna. Land use planning controls need to ensure that these soils are protected from urban expansion and are available to agriculture in the long term and that urban development is buffered from mechanised 24 hour farm activities.
- The rural areas of the municipality are considered to be productive agricultural land based on the soil types, subdivision pattern and climate and the significant level of irrigation infrastructure. Protection and retention of this land for agriculture is of primary strategic importance to the City.
- Major physical services exist, including the urban water supply for Mooroopna and Shepparton which is taken directly from the Goulburn River system and natural gas supply coming from the main Hume Freeway line at Euroa.
- As immigration plays an important part of addressing skilled labour shortages, increasing cultural diversity will provide a challenge of continuing to be a more accepting community.
- The influence of our indigenous population will continue to be important to acknowledge and plan for with the improvement of opportunities for the indigenous community.

- The Shepparton CBD is recognised as the principal retail centre in the region but requires consolidation of the traditional retail core and strengthening of its role and image to remain competitive with free-standing sub-regional centres such as Shepparton marketplace. In addition to retaining a good range of national brand retailers and large variety and supermarket stores, it is vital that the CBD continues to be a focus by its offering of boutique retailing, specialty food outlets, together with entertainment, cafes and dining.
- Competition between regional centres for community health and education services and facilities, and regional infrastructure investment in cities will be significant and success will be with those communities able to overcome infrastructure barriers.
- Higher education opportunities for youth and a focus on life long education needs will provide opportunities and challenges for this service sector.
- The Shepparton aerodrome is located immediately to the south of the Kialla Lakes residential development on the southern side of the Shepparton urban area. Subject to a detailed feasibility analysis, the future relocation of the aerodrome could provide an option for additional urban expansion in the southern growth corridor.
- Rail access is available to Shepparton and provides benefits to local industries exporting through the Port of Melbourne.
- Non-agricultural development in rural areas can impact on irrigation and drainage infrastructure and needs to be addressed as part of any new development.