

21.01 SNAPSHOT OF MELTON CITY IN 2014

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Overview

The City of Melton is located on the western fringe of metropolitan Melbourne. Melton is a large municipality (covering an area of approximately 530sqkms) and, being a fringe metropolitan municipality, contains a mixture of urban and rural uses.

The eastern edge of the City of Melton known as the Eastern Corridor is just 19 km from Melbourne's Central Activities District while the other major urban area, the township of Melton, is 35 km from Melbourne. The City of Melton enjoys easy access to Melbourne International Airport, Avalon Airport, the Ports of Melbourne and Geelong and national road and rail networks (including the Regional Rail Link).

In 2010 the Urban Growth Boundary was altered to allow urban development between the Eastern Corridor and Melton Township. The land between these two established urban areas is subject to the *West Growth Corridor Plan* and the development of this area will need to be in accordance with Precinct Structure Plans.

The Eastern Corridor adjoins the existing urban areas of metropolitan Melbourne and includes the suburbs of Burnside, Burnside Heights, Caroline Springs, Hillside and Taylors Hill.

Melton Township is located approximately 15km west of the Eastern Corridor. The Township comprises the suburbs of Brookfield, Kurunjang, Melton, Melton South and Melton West, and is experiencing residential development on its fringes.

Complementing the existing two major urban areas (existing) are a number of smaller townships and settlements including Diggers Rest, Toolern Vale, Rockbank and Eynesbury.

The land outside of the Urban Growth Boundary is located within two Green Wedges. The Western Plains North Green Wedge is the land to the north of the Western Freeway, and the Western Plains South Green Wedge occupies the land to the south of the Western Freeway.

Melbourne Airport is located to the east of the City and whilst no part of the airport is located within the municipality, some land in the northern section of the City is subject to the Melbourne Airport Environs Overlay as it is subject to aircraft noise exposure, at the western end of the east-west runway.

The municipality has experienced rapid population growth, with a doubling in population numbers between 2001 and 2013. The population growth is largely concentrated in the Greenfield urban development areas.

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21.01-2 Urban Areas

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The majority of the population of the City of Melton live in two major population centres, being the Township of Melton itself and the Eastern Corridor, which forms the existing western edge of metropolitan Melbourne.

Melton Township

Melton Township is located near the western boundary of the municipality. The township was originally established in the mid 1800s, and its current urban form is derived from its declaration as a satellite city in 1974 which led to major residential development. Planning policy has significantly changed since that time and it is now located as the westernmost end of a growth corridor.

The residential character of Melton Township is older than the planned suburban estates in the Eastern Corridor. The development of Melton Township has occurred in a number of waves, which is evidenced by the progressive outward expansion of the township over a number of eras. Most of the housing is detached in style.

The Western Freeway runs through the centre of the Township, with the Melton Railway Station located approximately 1.5km south of the Freeway, and the two major retail centres (the High Street and Woodgrove Shopping Centre) located on its northern side.

Eastern Corridor

The Eastern Corridor is located on the eastern edge of the municipality. These suburbs have developed over the last fifteen years and are nearing completion of its full development potential.

A majority of the houses in the Eastern Corridor are detached dwellings. However there is a concentration of medium and higher density housing including townhouses and apartment buildings located around the Caroline Springs Town Centre, which take advantage of the wide range of educational, institutional, recreation and retail services provided in the town centre.

Growth Corridor – Urban Growth Zone Land

The growth area between Melton Township and the Eastern Corridor, and in the City of Wyndham, is subject to the *West Growth Corridor Plan*. The growth area to the west of Diggers Rest Township is subject to the *Sunbury – Diggers Rest Growth Corridor Plan*.

The West Growth Corridor Plan identifies:

- that a majority of the land between Melton Township and the Eastern Corridor will be developed for residential purposes, including the land surrounding the existing township of Rockbank.
- that three employment nodes are to be developed. One in Toolern, one on the Melton Highway, and the other being the expansion of the Western Industrial Node to include the land around the existing Boral Quarry site in Ravenhall.
- land to be retained for the protection of biodiversity and drainage.
- the location of new transport infrastructure including new railway stations, arterial roads and the Outer Metropolitan Ring to service the needs of an increased population.

The development of this area will need to be in accordance with Precinct Structure Plans that are progressively developed for these precincts.

21.01-3 Rural Areas

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The non urban areas of Melton perform a vital role in providing a buffer between the outward spread of Melbourne and the rural hinterland of Gisborne, Bacchus Marsh and beyond. These areas which lie outside of the Urban Growth Boundary are known as Green Wedge areas. Council has two Green Wedges, with the Western Freeway forming the boundary between the Western Plains North Green Wedge (which is wholly in the City of Melton), and the Western plains South Green Wedge (which is shared with the City of Wyndham).

The City's rural areas have traditionally been used for grazing and cropping (primarily cereal production such as wheat, barley and oats) and agriculture remains as the dominant use of the rural areas. In recent years the main rural enterprises to emerge are horse breeding and harness racing activities and there is some evidence to suggest a trend towards viticulture and more intensive agricultural.

The rural areas of the City, and some urban fringe areas have always been popular for rural residential type living. There is a need for rural residential land supply and demand assessment to be undertaken to better understand what further development might be appropriate.

21.01-4 Community Characteristics

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The City of Melton's community statistics are as follows:

The population on 3 April 2014 was 126,680 people. Population projections indicate that the total population will be more than 241,000 by 2031, with additional urban development still to occur.

The growth rate between 2001 and 2011 was 7.8% compared to the annual average growth rate of +1.7% for metropolitan Melbourne for the same period.

The municipality is a major growth area in the metropolitan context, having accommodated approximately 9.3% of metropolitan Melbourne's population growth over the past 10 years. The municipality will continue to play an important role in accommodating Melbourne's anticipated population growth.

Melton's age structure is lower than the Melbourne average in the 2011 census with 55.3% of population between 0-34yrs (MSD average 47.7%) and 6.5% of population over 65yrs of age (MSD average 13.1%). The median age in the City of Melton is 31 years compared to 36 years for Greater Melbourne.

Analysis of the highest level of schooling attained by the population in the City of Melton in 2011 compared to Greater Melbourne, shows there was a higher proportion of people who had left school at an early level (Year 10 or less), and a lower proportion of people who completed Year 12 or equivalent.

Overall, 30.8% of the population left school at Year 10 or below, and 46.5% went on to complete Year 12 or equivalent, compared with 26% and 54.6% respectively for Greater Melbourne. However Melton's population is becoming increasingly better educated and moving towards the MSD average.

Analysis of the qualifications of the population in the City of Melton in 2011 compared to Greater Melbourne shows there was a lower proportion of people holding formal qualifications (Bachelor or higher degree; Advanced Diploma or Diploma; or Vocational qualifications), and a higher proportion of people with no formal qualifications.

Overall, 40.6% of the population aged 15 and over held educational qualifications, and 48.1% had no qualifications, compared with 47.3% and 42.4% respectively for Greater Melbourne.

Melton had a high percentage of two-parent families (54%) relative to the MSD average (47.9%) in 1991. However, there has been a significant rise in the percentage of single parent families in Melton; 16.7% (MSD average of 15.3%)

Melton's average household size was 2.95 people in 2011 (MSD average 2.6 people). Melton's average household size is estimated to decline to 2.76% in 2031.

21.01-5 Employment Characteristics

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In 2011, Melton's employed labour force totalled approximately 48,890 people.

However, it is estimated that only 16,139 jobs are provided in Melton. This equates to a Job Provision Ratio of only 0.3 jobs per employed resident. Therefore, the majority (81%) of Melton's workforce travelled outside of Melton to attend work. Approximately 62% of employed City of Melton residents (or 30,730 employed people) are associated with 'white collar' employment (i.e. managers, professionals, clerical, community and sales). Although this represents the majority of the municipality's resident labour force, the share of 'white collar' employees is below that of the average for metropolitan Melbourne (72%).

Traditional 'blue collar' occupations (comprising technicians and trades, machinery operators, and labourers) account for approximately 38% of employed City of Melton residents (or 18,840 employed people), and this compares to 28% for metropolitan Melbourne.

Analysis of the employment status (as a percentage of the labour force) in the City of Melton in 2011 compared to Greater Melbourne shows there was a lower proportion in employment, and a higher proportion unemployed. Overall, 94% of the labour force was employed, and 6% unemployed, compared with 94.5% and 5.5% respectively for Greater Melbourne.

Analysis of the labour force participation rate of the population in the City of Melton in 2011 shows that there was a higher proportion in the labour force (65.9%) compared with Greater Melbourne (62.5%).

21.01-6 Melton's Economic Base

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Melton has a diverse local economy that includes a strong retail and community service sector, manufacturing and engineering companies, and a range of small successful firms. The long established extractive and related manufacturing industries and the horse breeding, training and agistment industries are also key features of the region's economy. Melton's innovative land care measures and the availability of rural land also offers opportunities for most types of agribusiness and rural development.

In 2013, the City of Melton had 6,800 businesses. The vast majority of these businesses (90%) were classified by the ABS as small businesses, employing four people or less. In fact 62.5% of these small businesses had no employees (*Economic Development and Tourism Plan Background Report*, Melton City Council, 2013). The largest grouping of Melton businesses, are those in the retail industry, which account for 15.5% of all businesses in Melton.

Melton's industrial/commercial areas contain a wide variety of industries with the largest proportion in the construction industry followed by transport, postal and warehousing. Melton's industrial areas were identified as having considerable potential for further industrial development and the improvement of presentation quality. The major existing employment areas within the City of Melton are:

- The Melton Township Industrial Precinct.
- The Toolern employment node.
- The 250 hectare Industrial precinct at the intersection of Robinsons and Boundary Roads in Truganina.
- The 360 hectare Industrial precinct between the Western Freeway and Melton / Ballarat Railway line in Ravenhall.
- The 70 hectare Commercial precinct on Robinsons Road, south of the railway line in Ravenhall.
- The Metropolitan Remand centre, the Dame Phyllis Frost Correction centre and a newly identified correction facility.
- The Boral Quarry on a 1,100 hectare site bounded by the Melton Railway line, Hopkins Road and Christies Road in Ravenhall.

Additional employment areas are identified in the *West Growth Corridor Plan*, including the expansion of the Western Industrial Node and on the Melton Highway.

In 2013 Melton had a total provision of approximately 145,600 square metres of retail floor space. The Melton town centre, High Street, Woodgrove and Caroline Springs are the main shopping centres within the municipality. A range of smaller shopping centres complement these shopping centres.

21.01-7 Residential Development

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It is estimated that there were nearly 36,294 occupied dwellings in the City of Melton in 2011.

The Eastern Corridor accounts for approximately 76% of population growth in the municipality over the 2001 to 2011 period, with approximately 45,070 additional people.

According to the forecasts, the population of the Toolern Precinct Structure Plan area is expected to undergo the most significant increase, with Toolern's population expected to expand from 220 persons in 2011 to 36,410 persons in 2031, which equates to 28% of the total population growth in the municipality over the next 20 years.

The Melton Township (Brookfield, Kurunjang, Melton, Melton South and Melton West) is forecast to accommodate an additional 17,510 persons, or 13.5% of the total population growth in the municipality. This figure includes significant areas in Melton West which are presently undeveloped and which are recognised as Greenfield development sites.

The projections also highlight that the Eastern Corridor (Burnside, Burnside Heights, Caroline Springs, Hillside and Taylors Hill), which have been the significant growth suburbs for the municipality over the last 15 years are nearing residential capacity and are forecast to accommodate modest levels of population growth (2.9% of the total municipal growth). The limited population growth in this area, and the decline forecast for Hillside, is influenced by demographic change. These have been popular areas for families with children, and the population forecasts over the next 20 years reflect the situation whereby children leave home.

Toolern, Rockbank, Rockbank North, Plumpton, and Brookfield are expected to be the next major population growth locations in the municipality. Development is anticipated to commence in the Toolern and Brookfield areas in the short term, followed by Rockbank, Rockbank North and Plumpton. All of these areas are located within the Urban Growth Zone, where urban development is guided by Precinct Structure Plans.

Eynesbury is also anticipated to undergo significant change over the next 20 years. The 'heritage' theme in the township provides an important point of difference for a segment of residents moving into the municipality, contributing to a diversity of housing products.

21.01-8 Recreation and Leisure facilities

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The City of Melton offers a wide variety of recreation and leisure facilities and it is expected that these facilities will continue to expand around the residential nodes. Council has consistently required developers in the Eastern Corridor to provide at least 9% of their land (exclusive of flood liable land) to be set aside for open space purposes. This provision was negotiated between Council and developers as an outcome of the public consultation surrounding the Melton East Local Structure Plan 1991. Such provision has enabled the high standard of open space facilities which is evident.

21.01-9 Transport

03/10/2013
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Generally speaking, considerable distances have to be travelled for Melton residents to gain access to jobs, services and recreation opportunities. This is not unusual considering Melton's position as a fringe metropolitan municipality and its low density development. Nevertheless, this generates a high level of demand for both private vehicle and public transport based travel. Melton is serviced by a well developed road network and bisected by the Western Freeway. The Melton Highway and the Calder Highway are also important road networks within the City. These provide Melton with excellent private/commercial vehicle access to the city, western Victoria and Melbourne's major freight nodes and routes. Melton's public transport network includes a V-Line train service along the Melbourne/Ballarat line and a variety of bus services.

21.01-10 Infrastructure

03/10/2013
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The City is well served by reticulated electricity, gas and telecommunications facilities. Western Water is responsible for the management and development of a multi-million dollar water supply and sewerage treatment network in the City. The protection and efficient operation of this infrastructure is essential for the on-going development of

Melton township. Surbiton Park is the City's only waste-water treatment facility and is integral to the on-going and future development of Melton township. In the east of the City, Melbourne Water is responsible for main drainage and City West Water are responsible for water and sewerage services. The Djerriwarrh Reservoir is also an important part of Western Water's regional water supply and storage network. Land surrounding the reservoir lies within a proclaimed catchment area as defined under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994. Melton's rural areas have limited water supply capacity. Some areas are at or near to capacity, and large upgrades to the water supply network may prove costly.

Other significant infrastructure assets in the City include Melton Reservoir that is used for irrigation purposes within the City of Wyndham.

21.01-11 Environment and Landscape Character

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The City of Melton is within the area covered by the Port Phillip Catchment. Council will implement the Port Phillip Catchment Management Strategy within the City. The Catchment Authority is currently preparing its overall management strategy as well as the various detailed strategies that it is obliged to prepare. In time, the relevant details of these strategies will be included within the planning scheme. In particular, floodplain management has yet to be addressed in great detail despite there being some flooding concerns on the Kororoit Creek. It is anticipated that accurate flooding information will be an outcome of the Catchment Management Authority Floodplain Strategies.

The City of Melton has a diverse environment and landscape character. The key land management and conservation issues in the City include the control of noxious weeds and animals; ensuring sustainable land use on Melton's generally fragile environment; and the conservation of significant natural sites and remnant vegetation. The City's landscape consists of the following major landscape character units:

Grass Plains: Sweeping grassland plains are the dominant and distinctive feature of the Melton landscape. These are part of the Western basalt plain and cover the central and southern areas of the City. Land quality on the grass plains generally improves as one moves to the north.

Lowland Pastures and Woodlands: Located to the north of the grass plains. These areas receive a slightly higher rainfall and have deeper, more productive soil than the grass plains to its south.

Upland Pastures and Foothills: These are located in the most northern areas of the City. These areas have the highest rainfall in the City and support a greater diversity of vegetation. There is substantial tree cover in the foothills and upper ranges. The foothill areas have the highest quality pasture in the City. However the upper hills due to their topography and shallow soils are extremely fragile and limited to open forest use. These areas are also most susceptible to wildfire and need to be addressed in terms of fire protection.

Water Courses: include the Werribee River, Melton Reservoir, Kororoit Creek and tributaries, Toolern Creek and tributaries and the Djerriwarrh Creek. The natural drainage and environmental fabric of the rural landscape is dependent on the conservation of these systems. The rivers and streams also provide the opportunity to realise a significant recreation network throughout the City.

Significant natural sites: Melton has a number of significant natural sites which include remnant strands of native vegetation, native grasslands, woodlands, wetlands, geological features and flood plain areas. Identified sites include the Pyrete Ranges Forest, Ryans Lane Woodland, Diggers Rest Dry Lake and the Diggers Rest Rail Reserve Grassland in the City's north; and North Western Rail Reserve Grasslands, the Robinsons Rd and Mt Cottrell Wetlands, and the Exford and Mt Cottrell Woodlands in the south.