

Castlemaine Railway Precinct Masterplan

Opportunities Summary Paper

December 2022



Acknowledgement of country

Mount Alexander Shire Council acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Owners of country. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing relationship with the land.

We pay our respect to leaders and Elders, past, present and emerging of the Dja Dja Wurrung and the Taungurung peoples as the traditional owners of the lands and waters of Mount Alexander Shire. We also recognise all other Indigenous people of the Shire.

We acknowledge the vital role that Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung peoples and their forebears play as custodians of this region for many centuries, performing age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal.



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Introduction

The Project

The Railway Precinct represents a significant opportunity in the beautiful town of Castlemaine. This heritage precinct is not only a rich collection of buildings, landscape and natural features – but it is also the parcel that ties together key destinations in the Town such as the Town Centre, Old Gaol, the Mill Precinct and Botanical Gardens. As such it has a major community role to play as the cultural anchor of the town, and the place where local stories can be told, heard, understood and celebrated. We understand that this special precinct also presents opportunities for urban renewal, adaptive re-use and new uses. A successful re-imagination could tie the town together and offer a whole new experience for residents and visitors. The fact that this precinct is already well used by community organisations, commuters and tourists suggests that there is huge potential for its future.

We also recognise that the heritage context is significant and largely intact, be it the collection of buildings, relationships between the buildings, views, landscape and gardens. We therefore understand that changes must have regard for the character and form of the buildings and setting as a whole, and that heritage overlays are a key part of this project.

The Barkers Creek corridor running through the site represents another interesting site opportunity in terms of open space, recreation and habitat restoration. The creek is geographically the spine and axis of the town, and can play a much larger role in the character and identity of the town, central to this project. Additionally, the ideas put forward by the community and Project Reference Group about better connecting the Precinct along Templeton Street to the Town Centre are appealing and definitely worth revisiting.

The Precinct

The Precinct is a distinctive and unique landscape nestled within the township of Castlemaine in the Mount Alexander Shire. A legacy of early Victoria public works, the railway reserve is a rich collection of railway buildings and culturally significant heritage places. V/Line utilise the station to run trains and coaches that service the Bendigo, Echuca and Swan Hill Lines. The Castlemaine community utilise the station for these train and coach services. The community also utilise informal and formal active transport routes to, from and across the Precinct. A number of local community organisations lease buildings and areas within the Precinct, including the Castlemaine Lion's Club, Castlemaine State Festival, Castlemaine Girl Guides, and the Castlemaine & Maldon Railway Preservation Society which manage the Victorian Goldfields Railway. These organisations facilitate a wide range of uses that support tourism and community building enterprises.



Strategic Context

Council Plan 2021-2025

The Council Plan 2021-2025 sets out the strategic direction and priorities for Council and the community over a four-year period. The Railway Precinct Masterplan project aligns with a number of the Shire's objectives and strategies detailed in the Council Plan, including supporting health and well-being by increasing active transport options, facilitating growth while protecting natural and heritage assets, and attracting and building investment in the cultural and creative community.

Castlemaine Commercial Centre Study 2012

The Castlemaine Commercial Centre Study 2012 guides the continuing evolution of the Castlemaine Commercial Centre over 10 to 15 years, with regard to opportunities for growth and change. The report considers that the Commercial Centre will consolidate its position as the primary retail and commercial centre in Castlemaine.

A key feature and success factor of the Commercial Centre is that it is a compact and walkable mixed use centre, that includes historic buildings and streetscapes and serves both residents and visitors.

The Railway Precinct is located in close proximity to the western entrance of the Castlemaine Commercial Centre, and enhancing connectivity between the two areas will be a key consideration in the Masterplan.

Public Open Space Strategy 2016

The Public Open Space Strategy notes that Castlemaine and the supporting area of Wesley Hill provides the largest collection of existing open space reserves in the Shire (i.e. 79 individual sites). In 2015, a draft Community Plan for Castlemaine was released. The plan highlights that Castlemaine's bushland, hills and climate are highly valued.

Community aspirations for open space include a desire to enhance connections to nature and support adaptation to climate change and natural disasters. There is also a desire to strengthen connections between sporting clubs and to ensure that quality sporting facilities are available for community use.

These aspirations are all mirrored in the feedback received so far in our consultation. There is a clear community desire to see more connected open spaces that are versatile and serve the needs of the community.

Walking and Cycling Strategy 2010 - 2020

The Walking and Cycling Strategy was prepared to provide a strategic approach for Council to increase walking and cycling in the Shire over a decade.

The strategy outlined three networks for walkers and cyclists:

- The Footpath Network – Beside road, primarily for walkers;
- The Bike Lane Network – On road for cyclists;
- The Trail Network – Off-road for walkers and cyclists

The Railway Precinct is well-placed to respond to the proposed networks, offering updated routes that support the established network and enhancing connections through and around the precinct.

Dhelkunya Dja: Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan 2014 - 2034

The Country Plan provides a brief background to the culture, Country and rights of the Dja Dja Wurrung people, and describes their holistic Vision for Country. A series of goals, objectives and actions were developed, some of which the Railway Precinct Masterplan is well-placed to support:

Goal 3: Cultural Heritage - Strengthen our understanding of what significant sites and artefacts exist on Dja Dja Wurrung Country; Secure the right and means to effectively protect and manage cultural landscapes and sites; Make use of our cultural heritage to promote healing and reconciliation, teach Djaara people about their Country and laws, and raise cultural awareness among the broader community.

Goal 4: Bush Tucker - Lead the way in active restoration interventions to restore and protect biodiversity; Actively manage our traditional lands and waters to protect the plants and animals that are important to us; and promote the right species in the right places, so they can provide for us in a sustainable way.

Goal 5: Rivers and Waterways - Ensure all of our waterways are healthy, with the right water in the right place at the right time to meet the needs of the environment, Djaara People and the broader community; Share our creation stories to teach people how water works in the landscape.

Castlemaine Urban Waterways Management Plan 2018

The Castlemaine Urban Waterways Plan will guide the management of the approximately 7.7 linear kilometres of waterway and adjoining riparian creek corridor within the townships of Castlemaine and Campbells Creek.

This encompasses Barkers Creek from Walker Street to Forest Street, which falls within the Railway Precinct. The Railway Precinct Masterplan is in alignment with the goals of Management Zone 4 - Barkers Creek, which are outlined as follows:

- **Goal 1** - To connect communities and enhance the recreational values and opportunities within the Castlemaine Urban Waterways Project Area.
- **Goal 2** - To provide a habitat corridor that supports a diverse population of native plant and animal species.

The Plan aims to provide benefits to the public including an urban connection to biodiversity, climate mitigation through shade and cooling, beautiful places for passive contemplation, safer, better connected and more appealing transportation trails, and new recreation opportunities such as trail running.

Mount Alexander Heritage Strategy 2012 - 2016

Cultural heritage is often defined as the things, places and practices that define who we are as individuals, as communities, or civilisations. It is that which we want to keep, share and pass on. A heritage strategy sets out some principles and actions for how keeping, sharing and passing on our cultural heritage may be achieved at the local level.

The Mount Alexander Heritage Strategy combined information from a number of past heritage studies with extensive community consultation to arrive at the following vision:

“Mount Alexander Shire and its community are the custodians of a uniquely valuable natural, Indigenous and European heritage. Our commitment is to know our history, care for our heritage, share our stories and celebrate its richness.”

The Railway Precinct Masterplan supports this vision by:

- Protecting existing heritage railway buildings and structures, so that they continue to be a key attraction to the site.
- Exploring adaptive reuse strategies as a way to provide a greater mix of activities on site.
- Weave native planting and Aboriginal history and storytelling into the precinct.
- Protecting and increasing biodiversity along the Barkers Creek Corridor.

This ensures that the Precinct with its rich history and heritage will be protected, enjoyed and celebrated, as set out in the Heritage Strategy vision.

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025

The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP) sets out what Council will do in partnership with government, health and community service organisations over four years to protect, promote and improve community health and wellbeing in the Shire.

The MPHWP sets out four main priorities, and an additional seven focus areas. The Railway Precinct Masterplan can support the following goals:

1. Tackling climate change and its impact on health
3. Increasing active living
8. Improving mental wellbeing

The Masterplan will aim to create a more resilient, engaged and active community by promoting active transport connections, creating more gathering spaces for community activity, and increasing safety. Protecting and enhancing the natural environment is also a priority, especially along the Barkers Creek Corridor.

The Railway Precinct can also function as an education hub, where the community can learn about traditional aboriginal practices for fire and biodiversity management, wildlife and harvesting practices, and how these can be re-integrated into the future of the Precinct.

Castlemaine Railway Precinct Masterplan 2004

Council commissioned a consultant team led by Rush Wright Associates to prepare a Masterplan for the precinct in 2004. Given the document is almost 20 years old it is due for an update, however much of the information is still highly relevant to the current masterplanning process, therefore the document has been considered as the starting point for this project.

The 2004 Masterplan is comprehensive, with detailed information on planning, heritage and land-use. Following is a summary of the information that is still relevant to the current masterplanning process.

Heritage Overview

The whole of the Castlemaine Railway Station precinct is included on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) (H1664) as well as being subject to a Heritage Overlay (HO670). The concrete truss footbridge over Barkers Creek to the west of the station also has its own heritage registration (H1400). The 2004 Masterplan has comprehensive information on the registered buildings and places taken from the VHR that is still relevant today.

The 2004 Masterplan recommends that any new works or structures proposed should be sited so as not to impact the presentation and appearance of significant buildings, and not to interrupt the visual and functional relationships between them. Significant views should be maintained, and new forms should be sympathetic to the architecture of the heritage built form.

Significant Views within the precinct include:

- The view of the main station building in its setback from Kennedy Street, and at the western apex of Templeton Street.
- The (east-west) views between the Midland Hotel and the main station building.
- The (north-south) views between the main station building and the Goods Shed.
- Views into the reserve from Kennedy Street, including from elevated parts of the street at its southern end.
- The view of Castlemaine Gaol on the hill to the west of the reserve.

This advice is generally congruent with initial stakeholder feedback and analysis, and there is a strong desire to respect and protect the heritage features of the site. Adaptive reuse offers the greatest chance for development, provided it is done with sensitivity to the existing fabric and heritage values of the structure.

Economic Considerations

The 2004 Masterplan is detailed in its economic assessment of the site, taking into account development capability, housing, tourism, visitor accommodation and accessibility amongst other factors.

While a great deal of the analysis can be considered to be a snapshot in time, the following overall recommendations and key considerations still apply:

- **Financial self-sufficiency** - the precinct needs to sustain uses that are economically viable to ensure long-term sustainability.
- **Dedicated employment** - opportunities for permanent workers with relevant experience, with support from volunteers
- **Funding development** - Council should act as development facilitators, rather than sole funds providers.
- **Provision of support infrastructure** such as parking and utility services needs to be considered.

Planning Overview Railway Land

The railway land bounded generally by Walker Street, Forest Street, Barkers Creek and Kennedy Street was zoned Public Use at the time of the 2004 Masterplan, and has since been updated to State Transport Infrastructure (TRZ1). The railway land is also subject to a heritage overlay, which includes the Salvation Army freehold land as well.

The Heritage overlay serves the purpose of:

- Conserving and enhancing heritage places of natural or cultural significance, as well as those elements which contribute to the significance of heritage places.
- Ensuring that development does not adversely affect the significance of heritage places.

Barkers Creek Corridor

The Barkers Creek corridor is zoned Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ).

The purpose of this zone is to:

- Protect and conserve the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, scientific, landscape, habitat, or cultural values.
- Provide facilities which assist in public education and interpretation of the natural environment with minimal degradation of the natural environment or natural processes.

Additionally the land is also subject to a Significant Landscape Overlay, which include the following landscape character objectives to be achieved:

- Protect existing vegetation or landforms in areas which are visually or environmentally sensitive.
- Conserve or enhance natural watercourses, preventing water pollution or surface water run-off contributing to erosion.
- Wildlife habitats should be preserved and maintained.

Land Subject to Inundation (LSIO) & Floodway (FO) Overlays

Both an LSIO and FO apply to the land along the Barkers Creek corridor, to the west of the railway lines. Their purpose is to:

- Identify land in a flood storage area affected by the 1:100 year flood.
- Ensure development maintains the free passage and temporary storage of flood waters and minimises flood damage.
- Protect water quality.

Effects of Planning Controls

Land Use

Any transport related uses would be permitted, and there is considerable flexibility for other non-transport uses on the railway land subject to their planning and commercial feasibility.

Non-transport uses would be assessed on their own merits, and could include:

- Uses ancillary to transport use, especially reinforcing the visitor focus provided by the tourist railway.
- Uses which are stand-alone, requiring a fringe central business area location.

At the time of the 2004 Masterplan, the Mill Precinct was still undeveloped industrial land, and the retail activity of Castlemaine did not extend beyond the central business area.

There is an opportunity for the latter group of non-transport uses to build upon the success of the Mill Precinct by offering small studio, office, or affordable arts spaces without competing with the central business area of the town for major retail.

Built Form & Character

Any new building development would be significantly constrained by the heritage overlay decision guidelines criteria.

Development would have to consider the context of the heritage railway buildings, as well the heritage precincts to the west and east of the Railway Precinct.

The available railway land for new development would be limited in area, as well as limited by scale and character considerations related to the heritage precincts.

Any development should not adversely effect the significance of the railway precinct.

Additionally, any buildings or works would need to consider the protection of the landscape character of the Creek corridor, and take into account potential flooding.

Connection to Central Business Area (CBA)

At the time of the 2004 Masterplan, the station was not functionally related to the CBA, with few business / retail uses along Templeton Street between Barker and Kennedy Streets, and no fringe retail areas.

Since then the ability to maintain a fringe retail area has increased, supported by population growth and changing demographics in Castlemaine. This is additionally indicated by the development of the Mill Precinct and increased business and retail uses along Templeton Street.

Overall Masterplan Recommendations

The following table summarises the design recommendations outlined in the 2004 Masterplan and identifies whether the recommendation has been implemented.

Design Recommendation	Implemented
Zone 1 - Northern Zone & Freight Australia	
<i>Refer to the plan & description on page 40 for details on the below interventions</i>	
Improvements to the northern link	✗
Upgrades to the Main Train Line	
Improvements to the North Eastern Corner	✗
Zone 2 - Goldfields Tourist Railway	
<i>Refer to the plans & description on page 41 for details on the below interventions</i>	
Historic interpretative trail along Barkers Creek	✗
Path linking the new bridge on the south eastern corner to Walker Street	
Walker Street is the preferred future delivery access point to the GTR	✗
Zone 3 - Barkers Creek	
<i>Refer to the plans & description on page 42 for details on the below interventions</i>	
Environmental assessment and subsequent vegetation management	✓
Tree assessment & re-vegetation	✓
Repair the Concrete Truss Footbridge	✓
Footbridge located between Thomas Street and Creek bend with new shared path connection	✗
Complete shared path between Walker & Forest Streets	✗
Shared path/boardwalk along the eastern edge connecting to Gingell Street	✗
Interpretive signs along trails	✗
Zone 4 - Station Environs	
<i>Refer to the plans & description on pages 43 - 50 for details on the below interventions</i>	
Resolve car parking issues in the forecourt	✗
Provide pedestrian path from forecourt to Templeton Street	✗
Extend and upgrade the Lions Park	✗
Provide a tree allee from the Goods Shed to the underpass	✗
Goods Shed improvements (car park, southern wall improvements, landscaping)	
Upgrade the northern end of the platforms to improve pedestrian amenity	✗
Improve pedestrian link between the Gingell Street and Templeton Street via the pedestrian footbridge & underpass	✗
Upgrades to the station platforms to DDA compliance - particularly the pedestrian at grade crossing which links the platforms/provides access to platforms 2 & 3	
Improvements to the station gardens, waiting area and subway portal	✗
Zone 5 - Link to Town Centre	
<i>Refer to the plans & description on pages 51 - 52 for details on the below interventions</i>	
Pedestrian focused improvements along Templeton Street	?
Street tree replacement along Templeton Street	?
Landscape improvements along Lyttleton Street	?
Zone 6 - The Hollow & Southern Link	
<i>Refer to the plans & description on page 53 for details on the below interventions</i>	
Retain and enhance the Hollow as a key vantage point and ephemeral wetland	✗
Landscape improvements along the north & east of the Hollow	✗
Improved recreational amenity south of the Hollow	✗
Upgrade the landscape at the Forest Street intersection and underpass entrance	✗



Station Environs - 2004 Masterplan. For details see p.44 of the original document.

Strategic Context Summary

As outlined in this chapter, a great deal of work has already been completed relating to various facets of the Railway Precinct.

This work will inform our understanding of the site, and we will use the goals and objectives set out in these strategic documents to support our vision for the Masterplan.

We will pull out the relevant background information, themes and recommendations from the 2004 Masterplan and other strategic documents and use this as a starting point to base our key directions.

Through consultation with Council, stakeholders and the community, we will refine the vision, develop a compelling design, and articulate an identity and a brand for the Precinct that is designed to generate interest and enthusiasm.

Our intention is to create a functional, implementable Masterplan that balances quick wins and short-term activation initiatives with clear longer term strategies and road map for the future.

Existing Conditions



Figure 1 The Railway Precinct Boundary and Study Area

Railway Precinct and Supporting Areas

The focus area of this project is the Railway Precinct (the Precinct). This area comprises the railway reserve and the Barkers Creek Corridor. The Precinct is bounded by Forest Street to the south, Kennedy Street to the east, Gingell Street to the west and Parker and Walker Streets to the north. The parcel of land is owned by VicTrack. The boundary is indicated by the solid white line in Figure 1 opposite.

The masterplan will consider the wider context. Specifically the functional relationships between the areas to the north, west and east of the Precinct. This wider area is referred to as the Study Area.

The Old Castlemeaine Gaol (west), the Mills Precinct (north) and the Castlemeaine Town Centre (east) are key destinations located within the Study Area. These destinations are considered important due to their close proximity to the precinct.

- Railway Precinct Boundary
- Site Boundary



Figure 2 Key Precinct Locations

Key Locations within the Precinct

Broadly the key areas within the Precinct include:

- Castlemaine Railway Station building and forecourt, providing train services to Melbourne and Bendigo and coach services coaches that services on the Bendigo, Echuca and Swan Hill Lines,
- Victorian Goldfields Railway - a heritage tourist attraction,
- Goods Shed,
- The Lions Park, and
- The Hollow.

A number of local community organisations lease buildings and/or areas within the Precinct, including:

- Castlemaine Lion's Club,
- Castlemaine State Festival,
- Castlemaine Girl Guides, and
- The Castlemaine & Maldon Railway Preservation Society which manage the Victorian Goldfields Railway. These organisations facilitate a wide range of uses that support tourism and community building enterprises.

 Railway Precinct Boundary

Planning Context

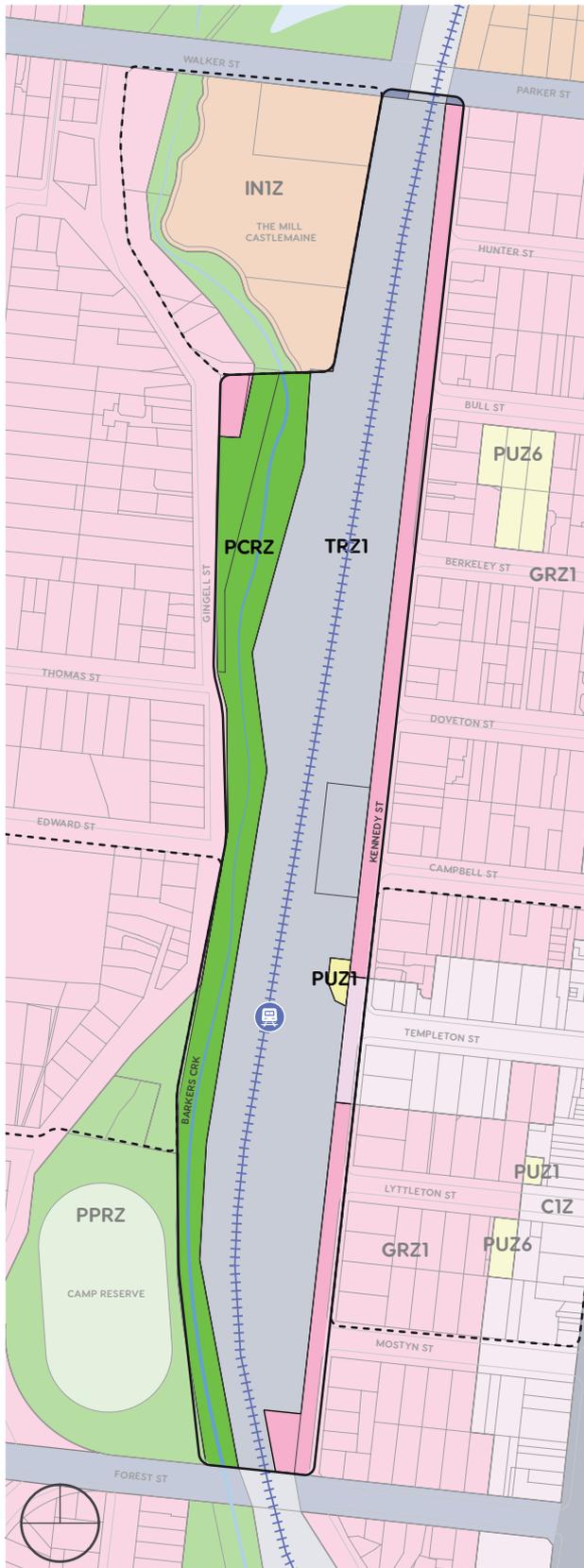


Figure 3 Zoning Plan

Zoning

Three zones apply to the linear corridor of railway land located within the Precinct Boundary:

- The larger parcel of land was zoned Public Use at the time of the 2004 Masterplan, however has since been updated to State Transport Infrastructure (TRZ1) through Amendment C14 (refer to the purple area). TRZ1 specifics areas that relate to State transport infrastructure and the following controls apply:
 - Works within TRZ1 require consent from Transport for Victoria.
 - A permit is triggered for access and subdivision.
- The Barkers Creek corridor is zoned Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ). The purpose of this zone is to:
 - Protect and conserve the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, scientific, landscape, habitat, or cultural values.
 - Provide facilities which assist in public education and interpretation of the natural environment with minimal degradation of the natural environment or natural processes.
 - The small area located south of the Railway Building is the Salvation Army freehold land. This land is zoned PUZ1.

	Precinct Boundary
GRZ1	- General Residential Zone Schedule 1
C1Z	- Commercial 1 Zone
PCRZ	- Public Conservation and Resource Zone
INIZ	- Industrial 1 Zone
PUZ1	- Public Use Zone Service and Utility
PUZ6	- Public Use Zone Local Government
TRZ1	- State Transport Infrastructure
TRZ2	- Principal Road Network
TRZ3	- Significant Municipal Road

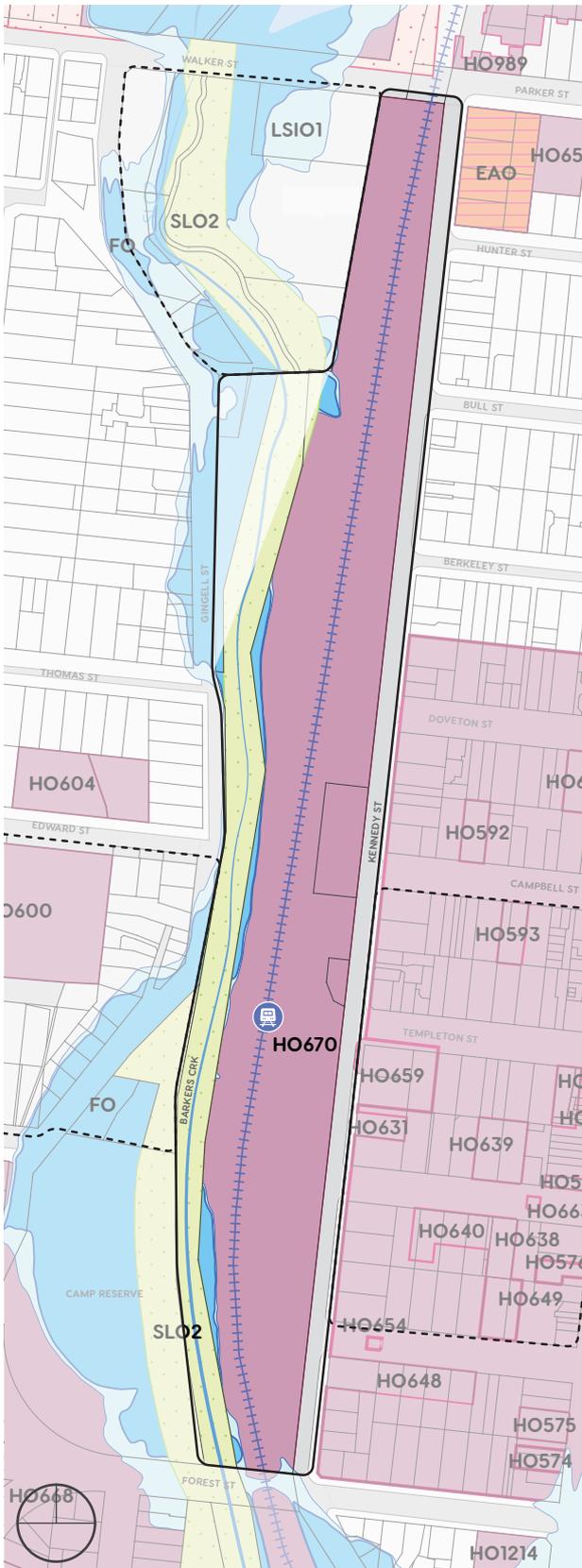


Figure 4 Overlays Plan

Planning Overlays

The linear rail corridor falls within 'Castlemaine Landscape Significant Area' recognising the combination of heritage buildings, varied terrain and significant vegetation within the site. The corridor is subject to the following overlays:

- Heritage Overlay (HO670) which includes the Salvation Army freehold land. The purpose of the HO670 is to:
 - Conserve and enhance heritage places of natural or cultural significance, as well as those elements which contribute to the significance of heritage places.
 - Ensure that development does not adversely affect the significance of heritage places.
- Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO2). The purpose of the SLO2 is to achieve the following landscape character objectives:
 - Protect existing vegetation/landforms in areas which are visually or environmentally sensitive.
 - Conserve or enhance natural watercourses, preventing water pollution or surface water run-off contributing to erosion.
 - Wildlife habitats should be preserved and maintained.
- Land Subject to Inundation (LSIO1) and Flood Overlay (FO). The purpose of LSIO1 and the FO is to:
 - Identify land in a flood storage area affected by the 1:100 year flood.
 - Ensure development maintains the free passage and temporary storage of flood waters to minimise flood damage.
 - Protect water quality.

-  - Precinct Boundary
- HO - Heritage Overlay
- LSIO1 - Land Subject to Inundation Overlay Schedule 1
- SLO2 - Significant Landscape Overlay Schedule 2
- FO - Floodway Overlay
- BMO - Bushfire Management Overlay
- EAO - Environmental Audit Overlay

Precinct Features

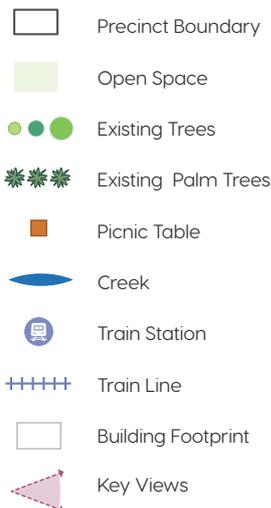


Figure 5 Precinct Features Plan

The Railway Precinct comprises a rich collection of buildings, landscape and natural features. The area is defined by its sense of spaciousness and openness, punctuated by historic railway buildings and infrastructure.

A common perception of the precinct is that it contains some valued railway buildings and the rest is 'left over land'. The buildings represent a legacy of early Victorian public works, however the surplus land also has value - it has landscape and cultural heritage value. The following landscape and natural elements contribute to the precinct's landscape character and cultural heritage value:

- Barkers Creek which runs through the precinct, in a linear alignment along the length of the rail line. Originating at Mount Barker, (north of the Precinct) Barkers, Forest and Campbells Creeks connect the northern, southern and eastern parts of Castlemaine. The corridor is heavily vegetated and has limited access points.
- The Hollow is a unique and historically significant embankment, located to the south of Lyttleton Street. It is a depressed land form that was created through land excavation when constructing the railway lines.
- Large gum trees and low level roadside vegetation along Kennedy Street define the eastern precinct boundary.
- Grassy areas and inconsistent low level planting sporadically punctuate the areas between the buildings and rail corridor, on the eastern side of the precinct,





View of Barkers Creek looking north towards the Mills Precinct revealing its landscape character.



View of the Hollow area, the depressed landform located between Kennedy Street and the rail line.



View from Kennedy Street towards Castlemaine Gaol.

- Elevated views from Kennedy Street into the precinct. Arrival to the precinct via Templeton Street provides the best view into the station forecourt and main station building.
- District views through the precinct. The Castlemaine Gaol is highly visible on the hill to the west of the precinct.
- East-west views between the Midland Hotel and the main station building,
- North-south views between the main station building and the Goods Shed.

The precinct interfaces with:

- Residential housing along Kennedy Street. This edge is highly visible along its entirety because the street is a prominent high point and has sporadic large trees located along the western edge. The elevation and openness affords views into and from the precinct. Kennedy Street functions as the 'front door' to the precinct. Eight residential streets intersect with Kennedy Street, one of which is Templeton Street, the key pedestrian route into the CBA.
- Walker Street along the northern boundary. Walker Street carries high volumes of traffic. The entrance to the Mills Precinct is located on the southern side of Walker Street and the Botanic Gardens are located to the north. Pedestrian access along Walker Street is poor.
- Residential housing along Gingell Street, along the majority of the western precinct boundary.
- Camp Street Reserve to the lower western edge. The reserve includes a large area of informal car parking, several old sheds, cricket pitches, basketball court, an oval and adjoining club rooms.
- Forest Street to the south. A pedestrian underpass, heritage rail bridge (landmark) and pedestrian footbridge are all accessed along the Forest Street edge.

This assessment has not considered the extent to which existing infrastructure adequately service the precinct. This will need to be addressed further through the masterplanning and detailed design phase.



View looking north along Kennedy Street highlighting the open and informal street edge that forms the eastern boundary and front door to the Precinct.



View from the western side of the rail tracks looking east towards the VLine platforms and Goods Shed.



View up Templeton Street towards the CBA from the Station Forecourt.



View from Archdeacons Pass to the Signal Box and the Castlemaine Goal.

Buildings & Tenancies



Figure 6 Buildings and Tenancies Plan

Tenancies & Uses

There are seven key buildings located in the precinct which have a range of uses:

Railway Use

- Castlemaine Railway Station Building which is a publicly accessible building managed by VLine. (1)

Tourism Use

- Goldfields Railway Buildings & Sheds (5) and the Goldfields Railways Platform occupied by the Castlemaine & Maldon Railway Preservation Society who manage the Victorian Goldfields Railway (VGR). (2)

Community Use

- Goods Shed is occupied by the Castlemaine State Festival and Castlemaine Circus (3).
- The Salvation Army owned and occupied building. (4)
- The Lions Club building. (6)
- The Girl Guides building. (7)

These organisations facilitate a wide range of uses that support tourism and community building enterprises.

- 1 Castlemaine Railway Station Building
- 2 Goldfields Railways Platform
- 3 Goods Shed
- 4 Salvation Army Building
- 5 Goldfields Railway Buildings & Sheds
- 6 Lions Club Buildings
- 7 Girl Guides Building
- 8 Castlemaine Mill Precinct (outside Precinct boundary)
- 9 Old Castlemaine Gaol (outside Precinct boundary)

Tenancies & Uses



Castlemaine Railway Station Building and Forecourt.



Goods Shed is currently tenanted by the Castlemaine State Festival and the Castlemaine Circus.



The Salvation Army building is located on a freehold site adjacent to the Station.



The Victorian Goldfields Railway storage sheds are dominant in the landscape.



The Lions Club is housed in an older prefabricated colourbond shed.



The Girl Guides Hall is located in the south east corner of the precinct with limited connection to the majority of the precinct.

Heritage Built Form

The Castlemaine Railway Precinct is of State level heritage significance because of its historical and scientific contribution to Victoria. Specifically, the Victorian Heritage Register identified the following elements found within the precinct, as representative of one of the earliest and grandest capital works projects in Victorian history;

- Midland Highway Rail-over bridge,
- Forest Creek viaduct,
- Forest Street rail overbridge,
- Castlemaine Railway Station and embankment (the Hollow).

Approval from Heritage Victoria is required to

make any changes to these elements.

The majority of buildings on site were constructed for railway associated uses. Some buildings are still in operation, however in recent years, some of the ancillary buildings have been adaptively re-purposed for community use.

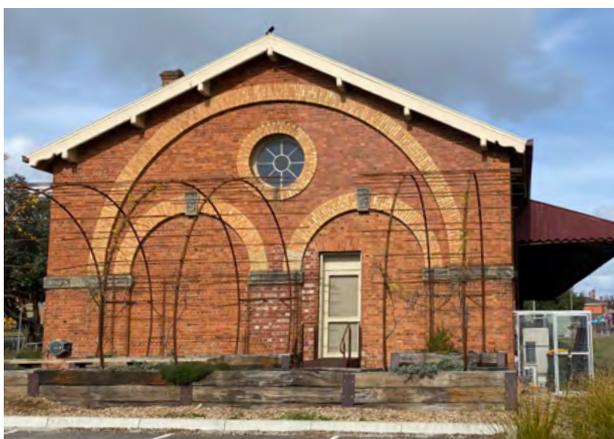
The railway buildings were designed for industrial use(s). As such, they form a collection of individual free-standing structures that have no functional relationship and have poor interfaces with their surrounding context. Their industrial fabric limits opportunities for passive surveillance and occupant engagement with the surrounding context.



The Castlemaine Station Signal Box has high heritage value.



The station building is the largest and most important example in Victoria of the 'Castlemaine' style. It features a unique timber verandah.



The historic Goods Shed building has been adaptively reused for community purposes.



The heritage registered Concrete Truss Footbridge (H1400) over Barkers Creek leads to the pedestrian underpass from Gingell Street.

Access & Movement

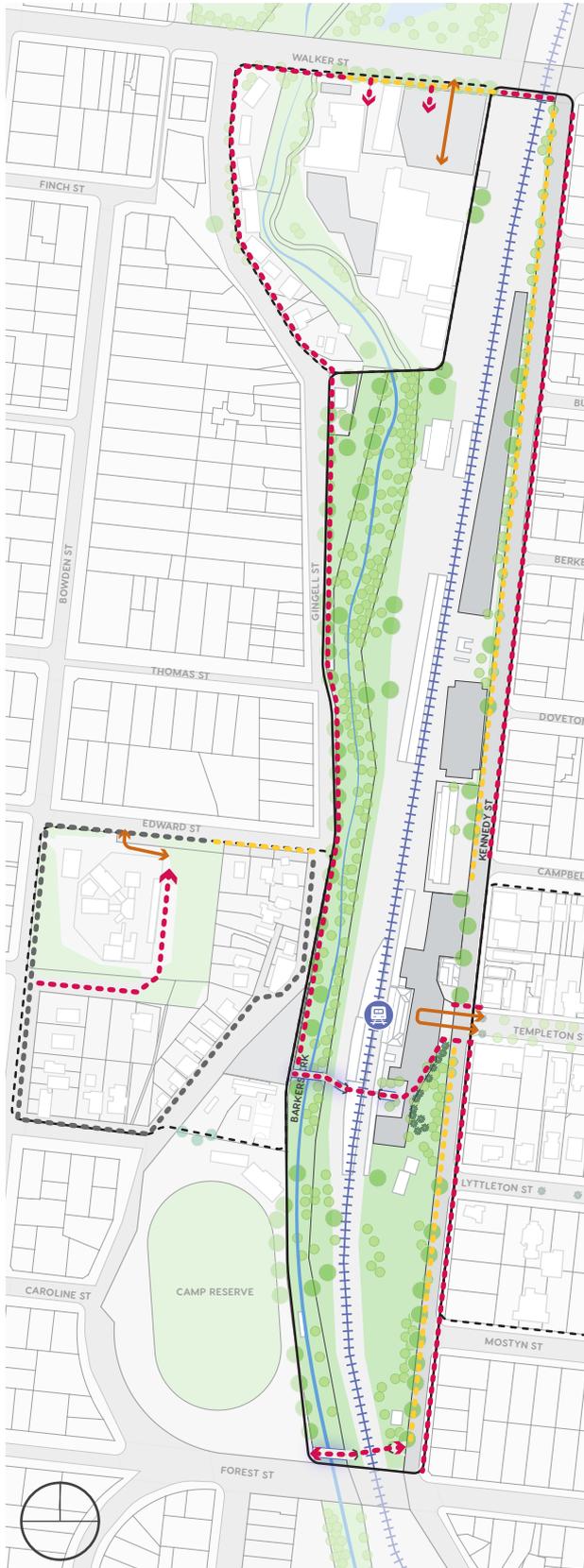


Figure 7 Access and Movement Plan

The Precinct is strategically located between the Central Business Area, Castlemaine Goal, Camp Reserve and the Mills Precinct. However, the linear corridor spans the length of nine city blocks and is a physical barrier to east west movements between these key destinations.

East west vehicle crossings are limited to Walker Street in the north and Forest Street in the south. Pedestrian movements through the precinct are limited to the Forest Street underpass, the platform underpass and concrete footbridge connecting to Camp Reserve, the level crossing located to the south of the Goods Shed, and the Walker Street level crossing.

Equally, pedestrian movement within the Precinct is also constrained. There are limited paths linking buildings and there is no recreational trail or access points connecting people to the Creek. However, there are some obvious pedestrian desire lines, informal pathways and key views that provide cues for possible future pedestrian links and access points.

It is important to acknowledge that this is a working station, and any future interventions would be compliant with V/Line safety regulations and protocols.



The Walker Street level railway crossing is in poor condition and could be improved to make it safer and more pleasant for pedestrians.



The station underpass is the only pedestrian east-west connection through the Precinct, but offers a poor pedestrian experience and is vulnerable to flooding.



Poor quality pedestrian paths contribute to a difficult and dangerous pedestrian environment within the Precinct.

Currently the Precinct is primarily accessed off Kennedy Street. As is the case for most regional train stations, the station forecourt is organised around large areas of disjointed and inefficient car parking. Accessing the station building on foot is challenging, and almost impossible for people with mobility limitations.

New methods of travel behaviour, such as increased bike and pedestrian access and automated ticketing systems provides opportunities to re-imagine access and connectivity to the station platforms and surrounding public areas. Provision of multiple access points to the platforms, increased secure bike storage, and well lit pedestrian priority paths, are key considerations.

There is limited links and wayfinding devices to help direct people to and through the precinct and link people to the wider footpath, bike and trail networks. Its worth noting some of the key recreational trails that could be better integrated into the precinct include the:

- Goldfields Track.
- Castlemaine Circuit Walk.
- Castlemaine to Maldon Trail.
- Castlemaine Off Road Ride Circuit (can be accessed via Walker Street).
- Proposed Castlemaine to Maryborough Rail Trail.



Wayfinding along the Barkers Creek Trail identifies key points of interest, however needs to tie into a more extensive wayfinding network to be truly useful.



The Station forecourt is dominated by carparking and the pedestrian experience feels unsafe.



Lack of formal footpaths contribute to a difficult and dangerous pedestrian environment along Kennedy Street.



Accessible access to platform terminates in carparking behind the Salvation Army building.



Stakeholder Engagement

There are a number of key stakeholders with interests in the site, including the landowner VicTrack, the Department of Transport (DoT) who are the managing authority, and V/Line and the Victorian Goldfields Railway (VGR) who are the respective railway operators for commuter and tourist rail services. Djaara represent the Dja Dja Wurrung People, who are the Traditional Owners of the land.

The long-term site tenants are as follows:

- Castlemaine State Festival
- Victorian Goldfields Railway (VGR)
- Castlemaine Lions Club
- Castlemaine Girl Guides

Additionally, the adjacent Mill Precinct has a vested interest in the site as it borders two sides of the area occupied by the Mill, and any additional enhancement or development could have implications for the Precinct.

Initial stakeholder sessions and workshops have revealed common themes and there is general consensus from the Project Reference Group on a number of key issues.

Divergent aims may arise between the need for transport providers to easily and effectively run their services and the desire for better Urban Design outcomes across the site. Careful design and negotiation will need to occur to ensure that both aims can be met so ensure a well-designed and functional Railway Precinct.

The following is a summary of the feedback we have received so far from key stakeholders:

Heritage Victoria

- Heritage Victoria have indicated they have serious concerns regarding potential residential development north of the Goods Shed.
- They have also indicated a preference that interventions to 'The Hollow' are the minimal required to achieve safety outcomes. Their expectation is that options such as improved lighting are investigated before altering the topography of the land.

VicTrack

- VicTrack have indicated that they would facilitate conversations with other agencies, such as DoT and V/Line.
- Land parcel north of Goods Shed car park has potential for development of affordable housing, however VicTrack are unlikely to undertake that without a housing delivery partner such as Council or Homes Victoria.
- V/Line requires the site to have ease of access and maintenance, low-cost repairs, and unhindered parking. These utilitarian requirements will need to be balanced with Urban Design aspirations.

Department of Transport (DoT)

- DoT has aspirations of increased train service provision with 20min peak intervals and 40min inter-peak intervals between the Melbourne, Bendigo and Echuca lines.
- They have no current plans for any upgrades around the station.
- DoT have indicated that an east-west connection across the track is unlikely, as changes to policy mean that at-grade crossing points will not be considered, and a compliant over-bridge would be very costly.
- Bus connections (Castlemaine - Daylesford) stopping outside the station need to be considered in forecourt upgrades

Djaara Corp

- Djaara have indicated that a Cultural Values Assessment would be an excellent starting point to establish both tangible and intangible values to be protected.
- Djaara are involved in the management of the Barkers Creek corridor and restoration, and were additionally consulted during the development of the Goods Shed Carpark.
- Djaara have said they would be interested in helping to guide the future of the precinct - early, meaningful connection ensures that legal rights and claims are integrated seamlessly into the design, and their previous involvement in the site reinforces their desire to see First Nations values incorporated into the masterplan.

What we heard from the Project Reference Group:

Council assembled a Project Reference Group (PRG), largely made up of representatives of the key precinct stakeholders including state government agencies, leaseholders and neighbouring businesses and organisations. An initial workshop was held on the 18th August 2022. Key themes stemming from the session are outlined below. More engagement with the PRG will occur throughout the project.

The Precinct needs authentic storytelling

The Precinct is a destination for locals and as well as tourists

Fencing and railway infrastructure doesn't reflect the Heritage of the site

Lions Park should be a destination and the Gateway to Castlemaine

The Precinct needs more open space

The Precinct needs more landscaping and amenities

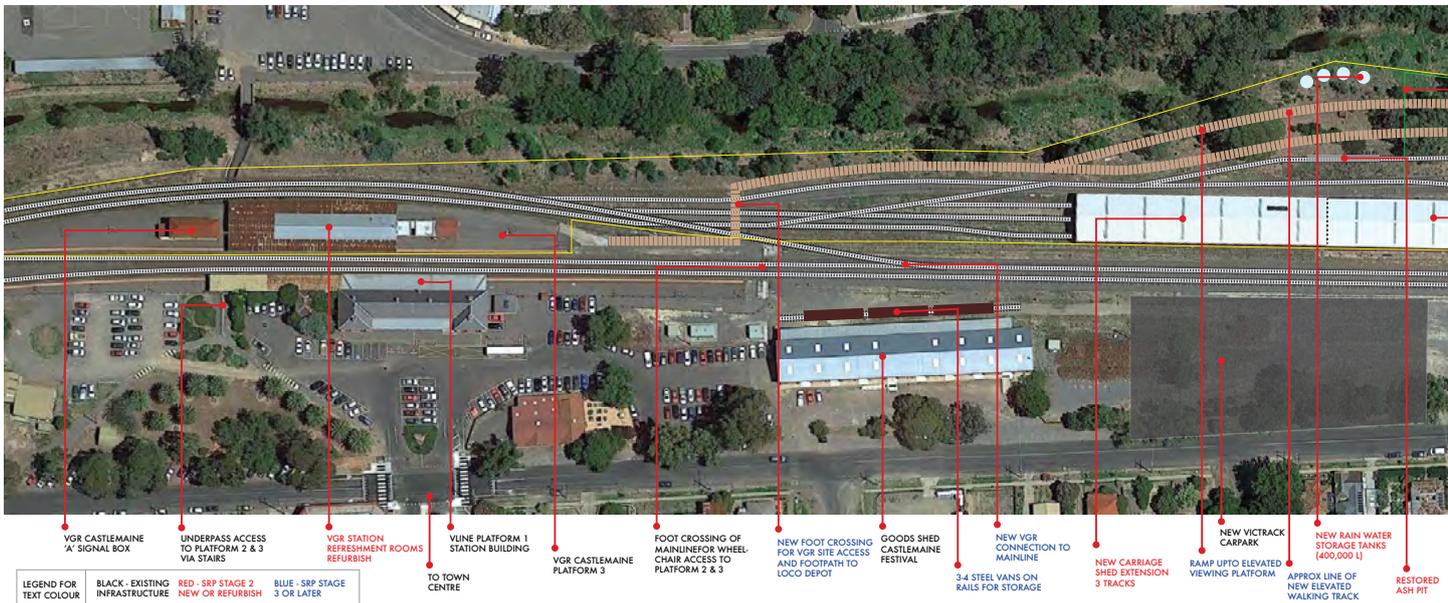
The Precinct needs better pedestrian connections

The Hollow is unsafe and difficult to cross

It's hard to know where to go

Carparks are hard to cross and lack of footpaths feel unsafe

Stakeholder Engagement: Goldfields Railways Site Aspirations

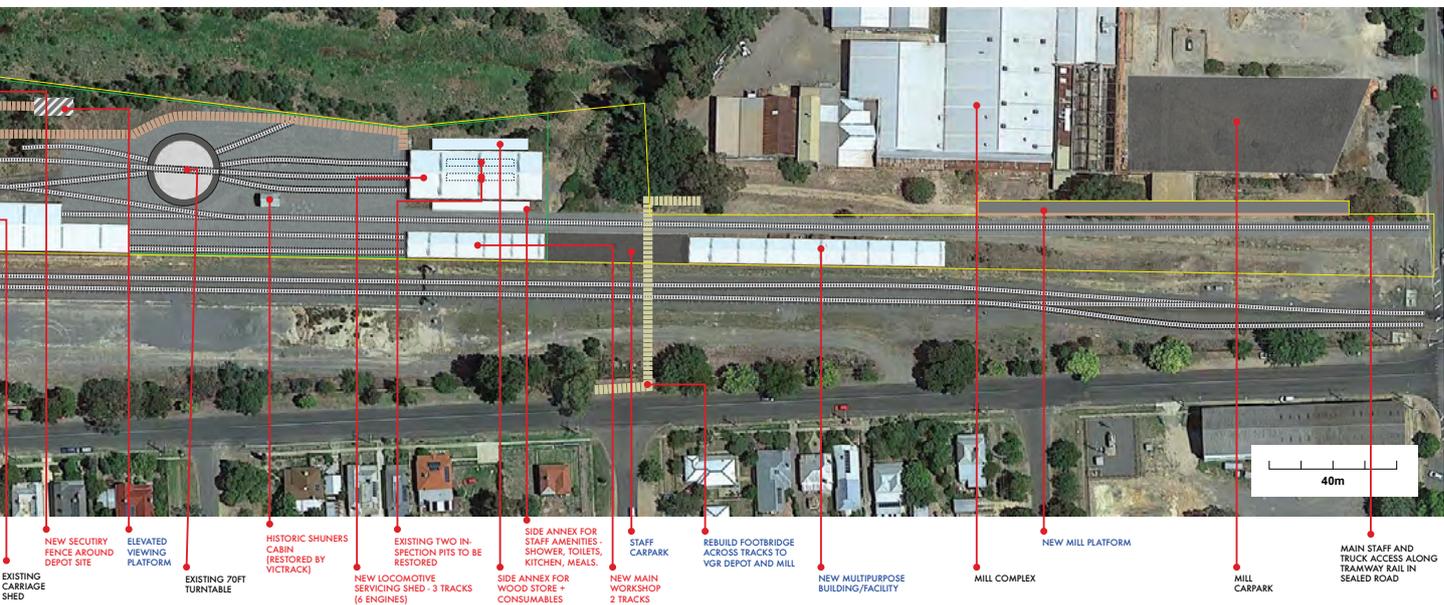


VGR Masterplan, 2018

Stakeholder Engagement: State Festival Site Aspirations

The vision for the Castlemaine Goods Shed is to create a vibrant and creative precinct that is home to the Castlemaine State Festival (CSF), supports and inspires creative practice and partnerships, engages the community and business, and is both financially self-sustainable and a driver for the region's artists and creative industries.





Community Engagement

In this first stage of the project we asked the community to tell us about the Railway precinct. Nearly 350 people visited the Shape Mt Alexander website page and over 40 people provided feedback via Shape, through a drop-in session or submission to Council. Below is a thematic summary of the key messages heard and an explanation of how this feedback will be used.

You've told us you love:

- The trees!
- The heritage buildings and historic nature of the precinct.
- The natural environment of Barkers Creek.
- The railway heritage.
- The mix of uses and activities, especially the arts and cultural uses.
- The rural, open character

And you'd like to see the following things improved:

- More shade around the precinct.
- Greater connection to Aboriginal history.
- Activation of Kennedy Street.
- More information and interpretation boards.
- Better pedestrian safety, and landscaping in front of the Station.
- Reuse of underutilised car parks.
- Greater availability of arts and makers shop spaces.
- Improvements to the underpass, including lighting, drainage, and general appearance.
- Landscaping and bike paths along the train line would improve the pedestrian experience.
- Better planned car parking! At the moment the car parks are an eye sore and detract from the overall amenity and user experience of the station.
- More public open space, especially a plaza-type space with good access to public and private transport.
- A mixture of commercial activities and arts spaces, it could be a good location for a museum or an expansion of the Art Gallery.

When we asked you to imagine what the Railway Precinct could look & feel like in the year 2033 we heard:

- A destination for locals and visitors alike, with a focus on both enhancing the heritage railway appeal, and creating a vibrant, self-standing arts precinct.
- Retaining the rural and railway heritage feel.
- More greenery, trees and landscaping, with aboriginal culture celebrated throughout the precinct.
- Great wayfinding and connections through the precinct to the Town Centre, the Mill, and the Old Gaol.
- Keeping Castlemaine local, while attracting and accommodating tourists and visitors from around the world.
- Well-utilised, functional and welcoming, with a country feel.

Ways to improve access to and through the precinct included:

- Providing a direct, clear, and safe pedestrian path from Kennedy Street to the station platform.
- Connecting one side of the precinct to the other.
- Connecting the precinct to a wider tourist trail that includes The Mill precinct, Botanic Gardens, and other key Castlemaine landmarks.
- Connecting into the wider shared path & cycling network.
- Providing safe links to local schools.
- DDA compliant access through the site.
- Resolving the underpass flooding issue.

Suggestions around underutilised areas within the precinct and how to use them:

- Some car parking areas could be used outside of train times if they had more shade.
- The land north of the Station building.
- Northern car park is used as a viewing area for the Goldfield's Railway trains. Could some part of this area be landscaped so it could be used as picnic area.
- The land south of the Station building - from the Lions Club to the Guides Hall - could this be turned into formal parkland with walking trails.

Ideas for other uses that precinct could support:

- Continue to build on the sites rail heritage.
- Accommodation options - both temporary and more permanent.
- Steam Train enthusiasts would enjoy watching from the north end of Goldfield's Railway area.
- Some hospitality and refreshment areas to complement the existing uses.
- Opportunity for more public gathering spaces, especially an open plaza.
- More amenities, such as information centre, interpretive signage, toilets, and seating.
- Greater arts and cultural uses.
- Fit-for-purpose space to accommodate markets.

How this will inform the Masterplan:

- Protecting existing heritage railway buildings and structures, so that they they continue to be a key attraction to the site.
- Adaptive reuse strategies will be explored as a way to provide a greater mix of activities on site.
- Weave native planting and Aboriginal history and storytelling into the precinct.
- Mature trees with be retained, with additional tree planting and landscaping throughout the precinct, with particular focus on the Barkers Creek Corridor.
- Sensitive development of under-utilised land to provide a mixture of visitor accommodation, affordable arts spaces and other uses complimentary to the Town Centre, Station and Mill Precinct
- Activating existing destinations by improving access, aesthetics and amenity. Creating new destinations that support current uses and create more spaces for the community and visitor to enjoy.
- Enhancing access and movement to and through the precinct and the surrounding areas. Improving the condition of walking trails, cycle paths and infrastructure, and vehicle circulation around the station will be a major component of the Masterplan.



Developing a Shared Vision

Key Elements of the Castlemaine Railway Precinct Masterplan

Vision Statement

‘The Castlemaine Railway Precinct will connect people, places and foster a sense of community. The Precinct will celebrate the historic buildings, contemporary spaces, heritage and community values of the area. Urban renewal will accommodate a mix of uses that complement the precinct’s role and function. Landscapes within the precinct will link with the original and enduring custodians of the land, and look towards a vision of future living and connections’.

Source - Background Summary, Castlemaine Railway Precinct Summary Document

Key Directions

Based on the Railway Precinct vision (opposite) and an understanding of the key opportunities that emerged through stakeholder feedback, the following key directions are proposed as guiding principles for the design of the updated Masterplan:

- Story-telling and interpretation should be sensitively incorporated into the Precinct, focussing on both Aboriginal and European cultural heritage.
- Restoration and rehabilitation of the land, with a focus on mitigating the impacts and damage that railway uses have caused.
- Intuitive signage and wayfinding devices should be integrated throughout the Precinct, highlighting key destinations, routes and walking times.
- Pathways should be formalised, connecting to main destinations as well as opening up underutilised areas of the Precinct.
- Site specific landscaping and public amenities should be incorporated throughout the publicly accessible areas.
- Investigation of cultural tourism opportunities should be explored in collaboration with Djaara.
- Climate-resilience should be considered throughout the Precinct, incorporating water sensitive urban design into landscaping and material choices.

These key directions are realised in three big moves:

- 1. Rediscovering Barkers Creek.**
- 2. Creating and Enhancing Destinations.**
- 3. Stitching the Precinct Together.**



- 1 Castlemaine Railway Station Building
- 2 Goldfields Railways Platform
- 3 Goods Shed
- 4 Salvation Army Building
- 5 Goldfields Railway Buildings & Sheds
- 6 Lions Club Buildings
- 7 Girl Guides Building
- 8 Castlemaine Mill Precinct
- 9 Old Castlemaine Gaol

Figure 8 Key Directions Diagram



1. Rediscovering Barkers Creek.

Barkers Creek is a significant feature in the precinct. While re-vegetation works are underway now, even more can be done to celebrate the history, and cultural and environmental assets of the creek.

Opportunities

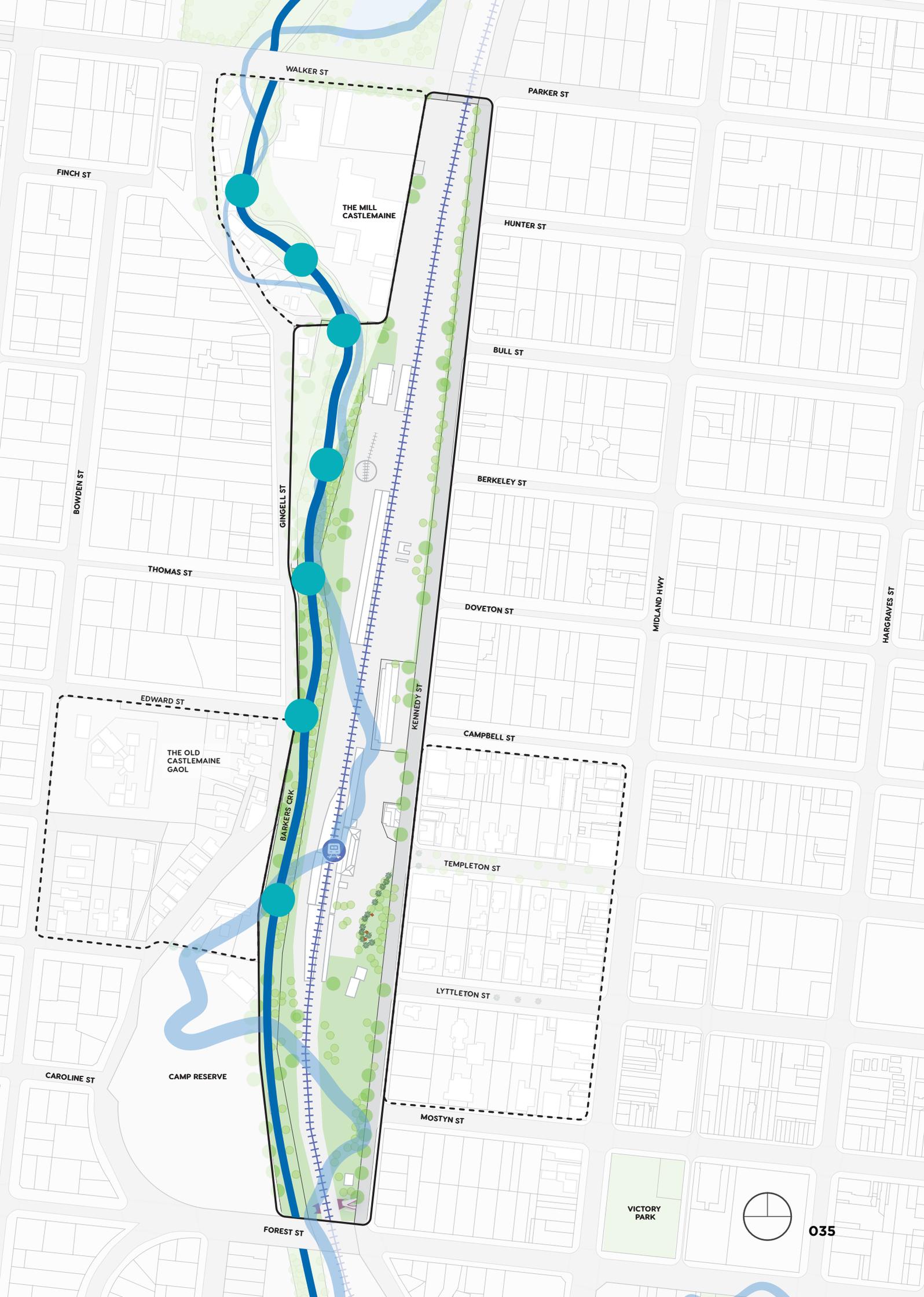
- Continue the work with DJAARA (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation) to balance ecological restoration, cultural awareness and public amenity.
- Work closely with DJANDAK to further re-vegetate and restore habitat along the creek.
- Reveal the historical layers of Barkers Creek through cultural understanding, and interpretation of the original alignment of the creek.
- Investigate the potential role the Precinct can play in being a key destination for cultural tourism.
- Weave together the threads and narratives of local transport routes stories.

In conjunction with cultural support, plan for a string of special places for people to connect with Country, along Barkers Creek including:

- Increased access to the creek, including potential board walks, viewing platforms, additional creek crossings,
- Educational and interpretive opportunities (through signage and artwork),
- More places for picnics, BBQs, and spaces for gatherings,
- More places for passive recreation (benches, seating) for quiet respite, and
- Walking trails and integration into the larger trails network.

All future works along the Creek corridor will need to consider flood mitigation and climate responsive strategies.





WALKER ST

PARKER ST

FINCH ST

THE MILL
CASTLEMAINE

HUNTER ST

BOWDEN ST

GINGELL ST

BULL ST

THOMAS ST

BERKELEY ST

DOVETON ST

EDWARD ST

KENNEDY ST

CAMPBELL ST

THE OLD
CASTLEMAINE
GAOL

BARKERS CRK

TEMPLETON ST

CAROLINE ST

CAMP RESERVE

LYTLETON ST

MOSTYN ST

FOREST ST

VICTORY
PARK



035

2. Creating & Enhancing Destinations

The Railway Precinct is already home to many high profile and much-loved destinations for both locals and tourists. Promote the Precinct as a major cultural heritage and arts hub, by further knitting its key elements with an embellished and integrated public realm and new public spaces in key locations.

Public Realm Opportunities

- Investigate the reconfiguration of the Station Forecourt to make it a more pedestrian-focused and attractive arrival experience to the Station without impacting the functionality of it as a passenger drop-off and bus stop (10),
- Upgrade Lions Park to create more of a destination park suitable for those visiting the broader precinct (11),
- Consider an outdoor public space co-located with the Goods Shed for outdoor concerts, events and markets (12),
- Work with Heritage Victoria to determine the recreational or garden opportunities within The Hollow (13),
- Strengthen the park setting along Barkers Creek including additional creek crossings to further strength access to key destinations in the Precinct such as Barkers Creek, seating, picnic facilities, viewing platforms, and additional habitat restoration (14),
- Support Goldfields Railway in improving access into their site, and creating a destination and viewing platform at the VGR turntable (15),
- Investigate the possibility of creating a small area of public realm that can serve as a connecting space between VGR land and the Mill Precinct (16),
- Look for opportunities to create additional park space in underutilised spaces along the railway line (17),
- Broaden the types of public realm offerings by including themed gardens (bush tucker, medicinal, cottage) or urban farming, interpretation and story-telling throughout, different types of event spaces to support the existing destinations such as Goldfields Railway and the Goods Shed,
- Support the CSF in improving landscaping and access arrangements to front of Goods Shed building.

Development Opportunities

- Work with Heritage Victoria and VicTrack to determine development potential of underutilised parcels within the Precinct such as land north of the Goods Shed.
- Opportunities could include affordable arts spaces, Live & Work studios, temporary or short-term housing, creative small office/home office (SOHO).
- Understand the need for long-term affordable housing and key worker accommodation.
- Understand the need for short-stay volunteer accommodation.





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- 2 Goldfields Railways Platform
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- 5 Goldfields Railway Buildings & Sheds
- 6 Lions Club Buildings
- 7 Girl Guides Building
- 8 Castlemaine Mill Precinct
- 9 Old Castlemaine Gaol
- 10 Station forecourt & plaza
- 11 Upgraded Lions Park
- 12 Outdoor events or hospitality space
- 13 Creek crossing points & viewing platforms
- 14 Viewing platform for the VGR turntable
- 15 Small park & Mill precinct connection
- 16 Northern linear park
- 17 Creative SOHOs / affordable arts spaces
- 18 New workforce / affordable housing development opportunity
- 19 VGR volunteer short-stay accommodation

3. Stitching the Precinct Together

Making the Precinct more than the sum of its parts is the ambition for this project. There are many high profile venues in addition to a number of community destinations dotted throughout the Precinct, however currently they are largely disconnected. The opportunity to better connect the existing destinations will effectively stitch the Precinct together.

Opportunities

- Add a shared path to the western edge of Kennedy Street (10),
- Improve footpath connections across the rail line on Walker Street to better connect visitors from the Station to the Mill Precinct (11),
- Investigate opportunities to establish a new creek-side path on the western bank of Barkers Creek opposite the Mill Precinct. Decking may need to be considered (12),
- Work with VGR to improve public access through the site, and specifically to the turntable which could also include a viewing deck (14),
- Investigate with VGR and the Mill a new pedestrian connection at the Southern end of the Mill Precinct (15),
- Improve pedestrian connections through both the Station underpass (16) and the underpass on Forest Street (17),
- Improve pedestrian accessibility to Old Gaol (18),
- Improve pedestrian and cycling accessibility to Town Centre (19),
- Improve pedestrian access on the existing at-grade pedestrian crossing at the northern end of the station platforms (20),
- Devise a wayfinding strategy that ties the precinct together visually and symbolically, that also provides direction to key destinations.





- 1 Castlemaine Railway Station Building
- 2 Goldfields Railways Platform
- 3 Goods Shed
- 4 Salvation Army Building
- 5 Goldfields Railway Buildings & Sheds
- 6 Lions Club Buildings
- 7 Girl Guides Building
- 8 Castlemaine Mill Precinct
- 9 Old Castlemaine Gaol
- 10 Kennedy Street Shared Path
- 11 Pedestrian improvements across rail line on Walker Street
- 12 A new creek-side path along the western bank
- 13 Additional pedestrian bridge creek crossings
- 14 Possible pedestrian paths through the VGR site (managed by VGR, open during rail events)
- 15 Possible pedestrian access between VGR and Mill
- 16 Improve pedestrian connection through Station underpass
- 17 Improve pedestrian connection through Forest Street underpass
- 18 Improved connections to Castlemaine Gaol
- 19 Improved connections to Town Centre
- 20 Improve and extend at-grade pedestrian crossing

- Precinct Boundary
- Enhanced Site Connections
- Enhanced Precinct Connections
- Existing Creek Crossings
- Proposed Creek Crossings (Pedestrian Only)

Conclusion

Strategically located at the axis of Castlemaine's key cultural destinations, the Railway Precinct's rich collection of historic buildings, significant landscape features and cultural values, provides great potential for transformation of the site into the Town's cultural jewel in the crown.

The Precinct has a major community role to play as the cultural anchor of the town, and the place where local stories can be told, heard, understood and celebrated.

