

Water's role in Vibrant Centres

Vibrant centres of regional cities and towns are attractive and inviting places for residents, businesses and visitors that reflect local history and character. They showcase regional innovation and are places of pride, identity and optimism – the centre of thriving communities connected to their region.

Place-makers and Vibrant Centres

Many professions contribute to the creation of Vibrant Centres through their role in place-making. People with roles in strategy and planning, urban design, engineering and environment, community development, and others all help make our regional cities and towns great places to live. They develop and implement strategies, policies and plans that shape the character of our regions. They design and build the infrastructure to meet our basic needs and support vibrant communities, and protect and enhance the natural environment that sustains us. They support the liveability and resilience of our regional cities, towns and communities.



Strategy & Planning



Urban Design



Engineering & Environment



Community Development

How does water support Vibrant Centres?

Water is a critical resource that supports life and livelihoods.

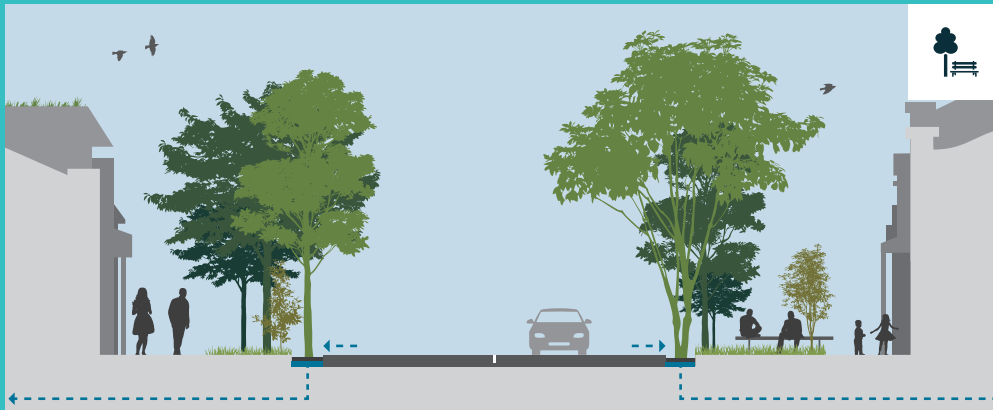
Water sustains the natural systems that underpin our urban places and regional communities. It supports urban growth and development, and sustains sports fields, parks, gardens and trees. Healthy rivers, lakes and wetlands are important natural assets to residents, businesses and visitors. The way we manage wastewater and runoff from urban areas protects the health of these natural places, and can provide alternate sources of water for our urban centres. Managing flood risks is equally important to the social and economic functions of urban centres.

All our place-makers need to work with each other and with community to achieve the opportunities water brings to creating Vibrant Centres in our regional cities and towns. Bringing together the different skills and disciplines makes these possibilities a reality by leveraging resources, skills and knowledge.

These pages articulate the connection between water and vibrant centres, and your role as a place-maker in collaborative and integrated planning to deliver this outcome.

How can I contribute to creating Vibrant Centres?

This could be achieved by doing things like:



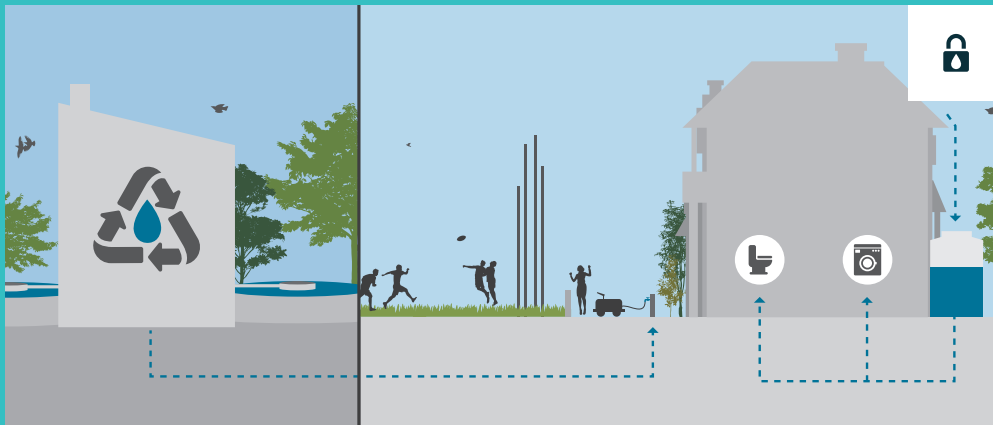
Planners and water engineers working together to create green and attractive urban landscapes supported by diverse and secure water sources.

Helps achieve Municipal Strategic Statement / Sustainable Water Strategy / Catchment Management Plan



All local place-makers come together to identify opportunities so all infrastructure and services can be leveraged to make the most of what each place has to offer.

Helps achieve Council Plan / Catchment Management Plan / Sustainable Water Strategy



Planners and engineers work together to develop flexible and scalable options for capturing new water sources that increase water availability and supports a place's unique community character in a variable and uncertain climate.

Helps achieve Local Planning Policy / Sustainable Water Strategy



Environmental and community practitioners create and sustain places of community pride, using a diversity of local water resources.

Helps achieve Municipal Strategic Statement / Council Plan / Council Health and Wellbeing Plan

Vibrant Centres: Case Studies

Landscape plans for town centres in Buloke Shire



Buloke Shire Council's recent master planning process involved the development of Landscape Plans for their major towns to attract visitors to Victoria's north west, foster community pride and connection and contribute to vibrant town centres through the creation of green, inviting streetscapes and parks. The shire's major towns are situated on two busy highways. Community feedback highlighted strong demand for attractive town centres to encourage travellers to stop, improve liveability and the need for green spaces and streetscapes to be maintained through uncertain climates.

The finalised Landscape Plans provide urban greening using low maintenance, drought tolerant, indigenous plants. These are supported by council initiatives to improve water efficiency and ongoing collaboration with Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water (GWMW) to develop diverse sources of water for streetscapes and parks.

Anthony Judd
Director Works and Technical Services, Buloke Shire Council

"The Landscape Plans were developed through consultation with community and staff. Partnerships are vital and getting them set up early is important for getting broad community support.

Water was something we thought about early because we were coming up to two years of significant drought. What was re-emphasized in those drought years was the need for green spaces in the urban centers – they are really important to travellers and community members. We are also trying to open connections through improved walking linkages to rivers, creeks or mountains to encourage people to stop, but also make our towns more vibrant and attractive for our own community members to have that pride of place."



Masterplan for Lake Wendouree



Lake Wendouree plays a central role in making Ballarat a dynamic, regional centre. It hosts a huge variety of sporting, arts and cultural events and offers attractive, diverse recreational spaces. In 2016, the City of Ballarat invited the community to participate in creating a new Masterplan to guide the city's investment in the lake for the next 20 years. Consultation on the Masterplan showed that local people placed high importance on having water in the lake and on water quality. They want future investment to keep it as a key urban feature for the community.

"When the lake went dry, it had a huge psychological impact on the city."

Adam Parrott
Senior Landscape Architect, City of Ballarat

"Lake Wendouree is the jewel in Ballarat's crown and very much the centre of community life so it's important to understand what the community values about the lake. Community feedback for the Masterplan showed a high appreciation of the value of the lake to local residents and strong support for initiatives that supported community health and wellbeing such as improved lighting for walking tracks. The feedback also indicated a high level of support for maintaining water levels and water quality.

When the lake went dry, it had a huge psychological impact on the city. Council initiated a range of infrastructure works to minimise the chance of it going dry again and protect water quality. These included securing different sources of supply and improving the quality of stormwater inflows. The new Masterplan will continue the focus on maintaining water levels and quality."



Why Integrated Planning?

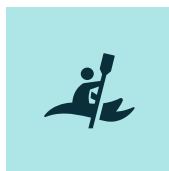
An integrated approach to water planning and management can provide multiple benefits to communities beyond water supply, sewage and drainage services, such as:



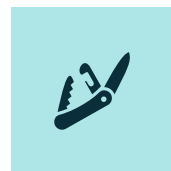
Green and cool streetscapes



Healthy waterways and habitat



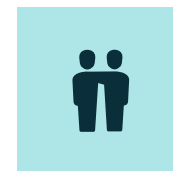
Water for sport and recreation



Multipurpose assets



Supply security



Engaging places for community connection

In order to realise those benefits of an integrated approach to water planning and management in an efficient and cost-effective way, we need to bring all our place-makers together. Even though they may not see themselves as associated with water, professionals in strategy and planning, urban design, engineering and environment and community development can all help achieve these broader benefits in the local context through early planning, collaborative decision-making and considering the whole system.

This document highlights the benefits of working beyond operational and organisational silos so that all place-makers contribute to Vibrant Centres through the way water is managed. Vibrant Centres is one outcome from a list of five – the others are Healthy Communities, Economic Opportunity, Healthy Environments, Climate Resilience - that all characterise the best of regional Victoria.



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