



Credit: Hepburn Shire Council

# Daylesford and Hepburn Springs Structure Plan

## Conversation Starter



May 2023

*Hepburn*  
SHIRE COUNCIL



## Purpose of a Structure Plan

The Daylesford and Hepburn Springs Structure Plan is being developed to manage growth and development of the town to 2050. It is part of Council's Future Hepburn project which aims to protect and enhance the existing character of our towns and rural settlements.

The purpose and function of the structure plan is to plan for the future of Daylesford and Hepburn Springs by protecting the distinctive positive elements of the townships and building upon their opportunities.

This will guide the physical and natural environment, amenity and activities of the townships and future growth.

A shared long-term vision for the future will guide appropriate development, protect what we value, improve liveability and empower our communities to thrive. Actions in the plan will provide the first steps towards achieving the vision.

## Let's start a conversation

This 'conversation starter' aims to begin a community conversation about the future of Daylesford and Hepburn Springs. We want to know your priorities, understand the things you value and your ideas for the town. Along with some background information, you'll find questions to prompt your input into this process.

Six themes provide the basis for the structure plan:

- **Housing**
- **Business and economy**
- **Environment and heritage**
- **Movement and access**
- **Community and social assets**
- **Urban design**

This information will be used to form a structure plan that responds to the needs and expectations of the community.

**Have  
your say**

## Acknowledgement of Country

Hepburn Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which we live and work. On these lands, Djaara have performed age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. We recognise their resilience through dispossession and it is a testament to their continuing culture and tradition, which is strong and thriving. We also acknowledge the neighbouring Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri to our South East and the Wadawurrung to our South West and pay our respect to all Aboriginal peoples, their culture, and lore. We acknowledge their living culture and the unique role they play in the life of this region.



## Snapshot

Daylesford and Hepburn Springs are well known as Australia's premier concentration of natural mineral springs. They are both popular resort towns due to their rich history and picturesque tree lined streetscapes.

They are surrounded by forest to the north, south and west across hilly country that becomes steeper on both sides of Main Road, Hepburn Springs. Farming areas to the east of the towns are flatter.

Key landscape and recreation features include Wombat Hill and its Botanic Gardens, Lake Daylesford, and Jubilee Lake. Further north, the Hepburn Springs Reserve is the key tourist attraction with its bathhouse and mineral springs spa resorts set amongst native bushland. The towns are also known for their award-winning eateries, boutiques, galleries, Sunday market, nature walks and accommodation.

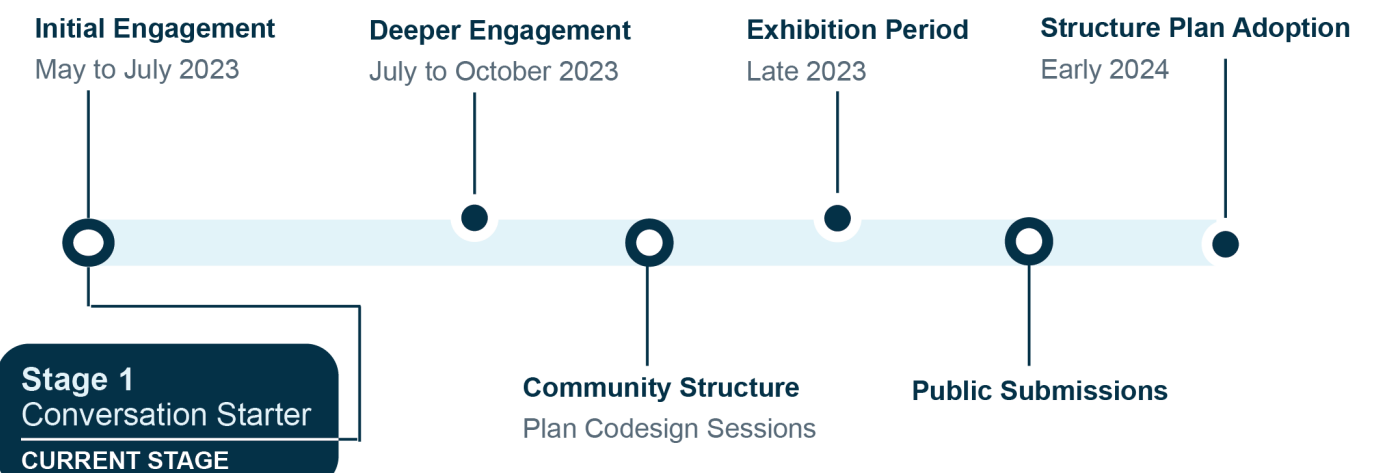
Djarra land management practices shaped these ecosystems over thousands of years. Hepburn Springs, in the Goldfields Bioregion, has drier forests with diverse eucalypt species, while to the south the Daylesford area has wetter forests of the Central Victorian Uplands Bioregion. These are dominated by Messmate and Manna Gum. Several tributaries of Larni Barramal Yaluk (formerly Jim Crow Creek) cross the landscape.

The Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan identifies Daylesford as a town and Hepburn Springs as a small town in its township typology. They have limited growth into the future. Combined, they are home to 3,149 people: 2,781 in Daylesford and 368 in Hepburn Springs. 17 percent of people are aged under 19 years of age, and the towns have the lowest home ownership rates of the shire, with a proportion less than 43 percent.

## Have your say

**What is your vision for  
Daylesford and Hepburn Springs  
in 2050?**

## Timeline





## Housing

Together, Daylesford and Hepburn Springs offer a wide variety of housing options, from heritage cottages, suburban-style development, to dwellings set in semi-bush and semi-rural environments. The townships are popular due to their historical appeal, amenities and landscape settings, and proximity to Melbourne and Ballarat.

Council's Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan is under way and has identified several housing challenges facing the Shire. Population is growing, and the tourism industry, central to the Hepburn Shire's economy, leaves a high rate of dwellings unoccupied at certain times of the year. There is a lack of diversity in housing types, with most houses detached with three or more bedrooms, suggesting that more medium-density housing, including apartments, should be considered to provide a greater range of housing choices.

Rents are rising substantially and there is a lack of long-term rental properties. This creates challenges, including not allowing people to age in their community as their needs change, and making housing scarce for local workers. This in turn impacts the local economy and community as people then move to more affordable areas.

Within the township boundaries there is some capacity to accommodate additional housing on vacant lots, and through further subdivision. The structure plan could encourage greater housing diversity and affordability, and explore appropriate places for new greenfield development, while protecting the town's natural and heritage values and containing environmental risks.

**Have  
your  
say**

### QUESTIONS:

What sorts of housing does your town need?

What do you see as the most significant housing need for your community?

Credit: Nearmap

## Environment

Ensuring Daylesford and Hepburn Springs can respond to the impacts of climate change is a key challenge: with hotter, drier, more frequent and intense weather events predicted. Hepburn Shire has already felt the impacts of these types of events in the last few years.

Future growth and development will be affected by bushfire, flooding and a range of other increased natural hazards. The towns are surrounded by forest, and while a bushfire risk, this provides important biodiversity and character. Protection of human life and property is critical.

Conserving water supply in catchment and forested areas surrounding the towns, while responding to bushfire risk, will be key considerations in the structure plan. Ensuring the towns are ready to respond to the already apparent impacts of climate change is a key challenge for the future.



Credit: Hepburn Shire Council

### QUESTIONS:

Are there areas in your town that you think should not be developed due to biodiversity, flooding or fire risks or other environmental constraints?

**Have  
your  
say**

## Community and social assets

Between them, Daylesford and Hepburn Springs have a wide range of community and social assets including:

- Several preschools and primary schools, and a secondary school.
- The Daylesford Town Hall and Council's offices, Neighbourhood Centre, senior citizens centre and the transfer station.
- Recreation facilities like the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens, Lake Daylesford and Jubilee Lake, Hepburn Springs Reserve and Daylesford swimming pool.
- Daylesford Hospital

An Indoor Aquatics Provision Feasibility Study for the whole Shire is underway.

A range of facilities support the tourism and cultural roles of the towns, building on the museums, heritage sites and major events calendar.

Significant investment is underway on the Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens and mineral springs infrastructure.

Many of these facilities provide for both locals and visitors. It will be important to ensure these assets keep pace with changing community needs as the population grows.

The structure plan could identify options and priorities for investment in community and social assets, ensuring these meet changing needs and are well located, as well as by improving links to nearby open spaces and trails, such as through better wayfinding.

### QUESTIONS:

What additional community or cultural infrastructure is needed in your town?

**Have  
your  
say**



## Heritage

Originally managed by age-old practices of the Djaara people, the natural ecosystems of the area, such as Sailors Creek and its tributaries, have been significantly disturbed by: mining, land clearing, grazing and pasture improvement, conversion of forest to pine plantation, weed invasion and permanent human settlement.

Remnant vegetation exists in key landscape corridors including the Wombat Forest and along the waterways, the Hepburn Regional Park, Lake Daylesford, Jubilee Lake and Hepburn Springs Reserve, and on private land. Local endangered species include the Powerful Owl, Brush-Tailed Phascogale, Gang-Gang Cockatoo, and the Creeping Grevillea.

Further support for conservation work on private land would also protect the integrity of the Wombat State Forest and build biolinks. This may provide opportunities to reinstate some traditional land management practices and significant species.

The structure plan could identify actions to further restore waterways and reserves, to strengthen their wildlife support role, increase appreciation of original ecosystems, and reinstate some traditional land management practices. Conservation on private land may also help protect the large, significant stands of remnant forest.

Places of cultural heritage significance to Djaara exist in and around Dylesford and Hepburn Springs. These include artefacts, scar trees, middens and places with spiritual connection to Country.

Hepburn Shire's intact 19th century gold mining landscapes are of state, national and potentially international significance, showing the progression of the gold rush era within Australia.

The mineral springs led to significant tourism development such as spa facilities, and numerous guest houses and other tourist accommodation.

The Shire's built, natural and cultural heritage are fundamental to its sense of identity. The Daylesford and Hepburn Springs Structure Plan could preserve and protect these assets, build appreciation of the Shire's history and optimise tourism opportunities.



*Credit: Daylesford Macedon Tourism*



**Have  
your  
say**

### QUESTIONS:

What is the most important heritage place or building to you in your town?

Do you have any stories about your town and what makes it special?

## Business and economy

The economy of the two towns is built on a strong history as of a spa town and tourism is an important industry for both towns and the Shire more broadly. Residents also work in school education, hospitals, healthcare, supermarket and grocery stores, retail, agriculture, sheep, beef cattle, grain farming and hospitality. Employment in agriculture is decreasing while employment in aged care and social assistance is rising.

Daylesford and Hepburn Springs contain numerous spas, restaurants and galleries along with many gardens and accommodation options, including cottage style bed and breakfasts B&Bs through to resort style developments. These are supported by a range of annual events, the weekly Daylesford Sunday market in Daylesford and heritage train services.

As the spa industry grows, it is important that the towns continue to innovate so as to not lose market share. The structure plan could identify opportunities to support tourism and events that bolster the expanding spa industry supporting the tourism economy for residents. This may include projects to enhance and protect streetscapes and township amenity of the towns.



*Credit: Daylesford Macedon Tourism*

### QUESTIONS:

What types of businesses and services would you like to see added to your town?

What would make your town more attractive for businesses?

**Have  
your  
say**

Daylesford's has a defined town centre, a supermarket, a range of local convenience stores, a chemist, hardware shop and takeaway shops. Vincent Street, the heart of the town, is dominated by gift shops, restaurants and cafes serving a largely visitor market.

The town centre of Hepburn Springs is less defined, consisting of tourism-based retail, dining and accommodation options catering primarily to tourists.

For both towns, future commercial floorspace requirements to 2041 can be met by the current supply of commercial land within existing township boundaries. Demand is likely to be driven by health services for an ageing population and the education sectors.

Balancing the commercial needs of locals and tourists is key to the long-term success of both Daylesford and Hepburn Springs.



*Credit: Daylesford Macedon Tourism*



## Movement and access

Hepburn Springs and Daylesford are well connected by main roads to Ballarat, Ballan (and Western Freeway), Kyneton, and Castlemaine. Several V/Line coach services connect each weekday to Ballarat, Woodend, Castlemaine and beyond (Mildura, Geelong, Bendigo). There is limited connecting bus services to V/Line trains for access to and from Melbourne.

While the resident population is quite small, during weekends and holiday periods the visitor population grows significantly and can stretch the capacity of the local facilities. Speed limits vary between 40-60km/h, and high traffic levels keep speeds down at busy times.

Vincent Street provides a compact town centre for Daylesford and is often very busy, with parallel and median area parking, and a larger off-street car parking area adjoining the supermarket. Hepburn Springs' centre is more spread out, with parallel parking along its length.

Residential areas for both towns are low density, many within walking distance of the centres, but hilly terrain limits the ease of walking and cycling. Many local streets are without sealed footpaths and there are some unpaved roads, however away from the tourist centres there is little local traffic, which makes walking relatively safe.



Credit: Plan2Place Consulting

### QUESTIONS:

**Tell us where and/or how walking facilities could be improved?**

**Tell us where and/or how cycling facilities could be improved?**

**Have  
your  
say**

There are few dedicated cycling facilities. Opportunities exist to improve these, especially where visitors make use of bike hire to get around locally. There are some good walking tracks and trails linking to surrounding bushland tracks, and settlements like Sailors Falls.

The structure plan could identify opportunities to improve connections between key community and tourist infrastructure. Opportunities to build upon the Spa Country tourist railway and enhance active transport links could be explored. Accessibility and safety should be considered.



Credit: Plan2Place Consulting

## Urban design

People are attracted to the distinct heritage building, landscape settings and character of Daylesford and Hepburn Springs.

Hepburn Springs and Daylesford have a distinct landscape setting in Victoria's Central Highlands region, surrounded by pastoral and forest scenery.

Neighbourhood character is a combination of the features of a neighbourhood in both public spaces and the private realm. Everything from the design of streets to the siting and design of dwellings contributes to the overall character, creating a distinct feeling or sense of place.

A focus on urban design will assist to ensure that the town centres are more functional, sustainable, and attractive. Well-designed public spaces, buildings, streets, gardens and landscapes ensure that these are great places for the community and add to the overall character of the towns.

Council is undertaking a Neighbourhood Character Study for residential areas and an Urban Design Framework to guide the public realm and built form outcomes for the town centres. These studies will provide a physical framework for managing change and setting new directions over time, while considering community values and needs. They will provide vital input into the development of the structure plan.

The structure plan could explore opportunities to improve connections to nearby open spaces, provide better wayfinding, manage and protect avenues of honour and retain heritage character.



Credit: Hansen Partnership



Credit: Daylesford Macedon Tourism

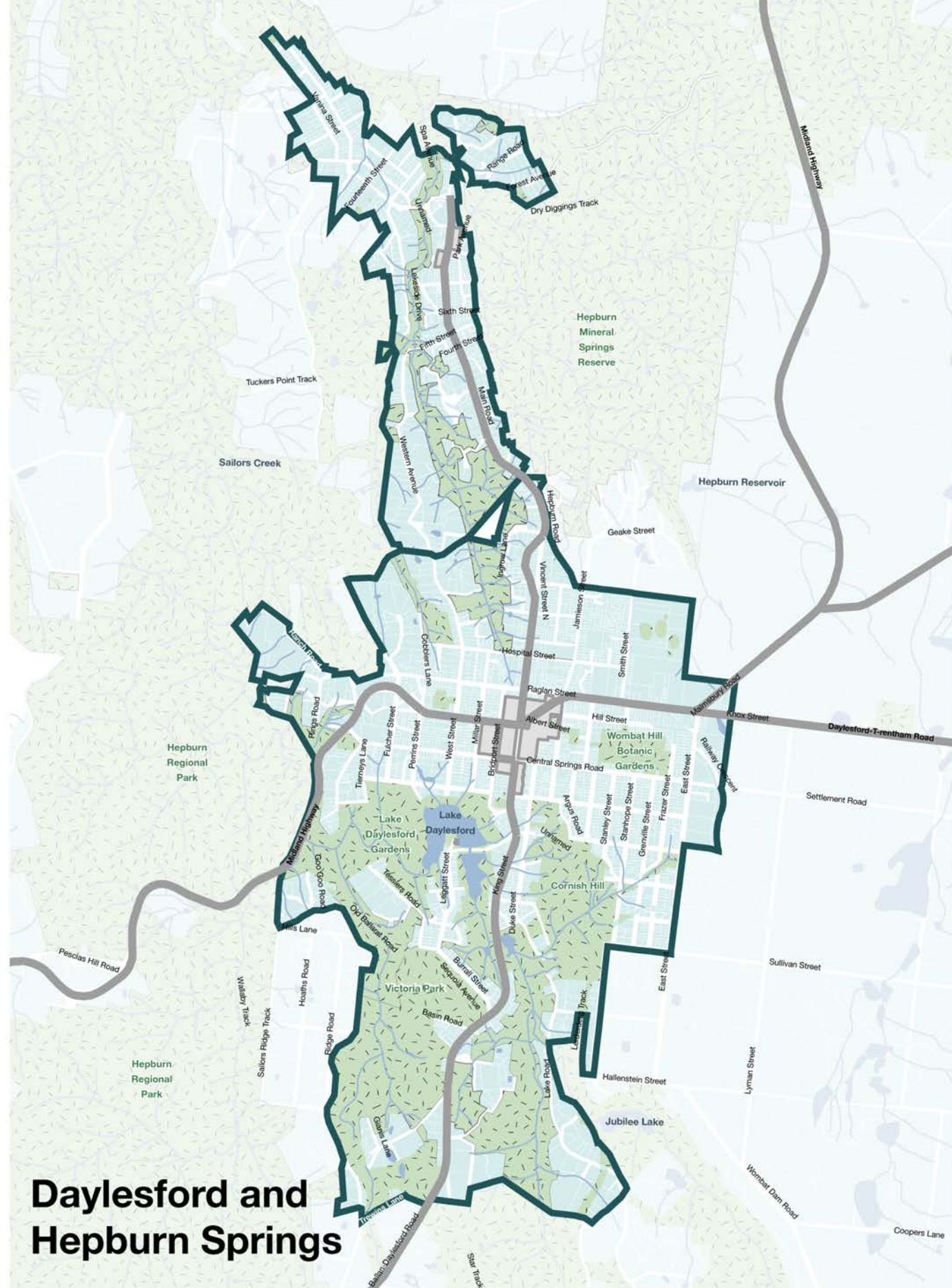
### QUESTIONS:

**What are the most important features that contribute to the character of your town?**

**What is it about your local area that is important to you and the overall character, amenity, and feel of your neighbourhood?**

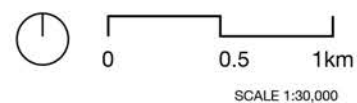
**Have  
your  
say**





## Daylesford and Hepburn Springs

- Township boundary
- Major roads
- Cadastral boundaries
- Waterbodies
- Watercourses
- Railway Line
- Train Station
- Open spaces
- Commercial and Civic Facilities



**Have your say at**  
<https://participate.hepburn.vic.gov.au/future-hepburn>



**Future Hepburn  
Participate Page**

