



*Credit: Visit Victoria*

# Creswick Structure Plan

## Progressing the Conversation



Future  
Hepburn

May 2023

*Hepburn*  
SHIRE COUNCIL



# Purpose of a Structure Plan

The Creswick 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 Creswick Structure Plan is to plan for the future of Creswick by protecting the distinctive positive elements of the township and build upon its opportunities. This will guide the physical and natural environment, amenity and activities of the township and its 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.

# Progressing the conversation

Building on previous engagement with the Creswick community held in early 2022, we would like to progress the conversation about the future of Creswick. This document will provide you with background information, and prompting questions. We want to know more about your thoughts, preferences and priorities for the following six themes. These are the basis for the structure plan:

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



# 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

Located just 19 kilometres north of Ballarat, in the east of the Shire, Creswick is the Shire's largest town. It is surrounded by forest to its east, south and south-west and well known for its forestry industry. It has beautiful tree plantings and walking trails established by forestry pioneer John La Gerche. Shady plane trees and grand buildings, evidence of its gold boom, line its elegantly curved main street.

Creswick has a wide range of retail options. It also has a tourism role, which enriches the local economy. Creswick's assets are showcased through local events such as the Creswick Market, CresFest and well-known mountain bike trail network. The Creswick School of Forestry, part of Melbourne University, provides world class research and forest science education. Its grounds and architecture reflect the goldfields heritage.

Creswick is where the Victorian Volcanic Plains and Central Victorian Uplands bioregions meet.

Surrounding hills had forests of Broad-Leaf Peppermint, Messmate and Scentbark, while scattered River Redgum over wildflower rich grasslands occurred to the north. Traditional Owners' land management practices shaped these ecosystems over thousands of years.

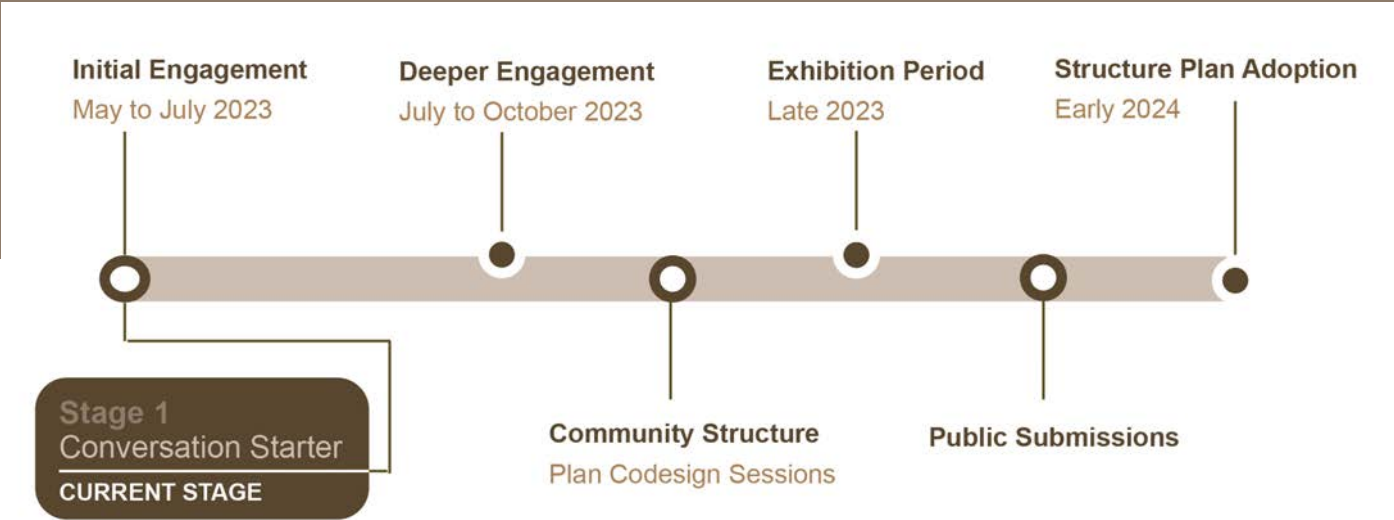
Creswick Creek flows through the centre of town. The creek is crossed by several main roads towards Clunes and Daylesford, and there are numerous creeks, small streams and gullies which feed into it.

Creswick has the largest population of the shire's towns, with 3,279 people. Relative to other shire towns it has a greater proportion of young people with 21 percent (517) of residents under 20 years of age. It's estimated 29 percent (783) of residents are over 65 years of age.

## Have your say

How do we retain what we value about Creswick into the future?

# Timeline







## The 2022 Creswick Survey

In early 2022, we started the Structure Planning conversation with the people of Creswick. We asked what people valued and how they saw their community's identity. We also asked about what concerned them and what they wanted to retain into the future.

People saw Creswick as a town with strong sense of community, rural and quiet, where people knew one another. They valued its historic feel and access to shops and services. People enjoyed the close access to the natural environment and outdoor activities.

Moving into the future, Creswick people wanted to retain the small town feel, including the slower pace of life. They wanted to retain the township's heritage buildings and town character. They appreciated the balance between maintaining the town for locals rather than solely focusing on tourism.

In 2042 Creswick residents wanted to see Creswick looking largely as it does today. They recognise that this will need to be balanced against a more opportunities for new housing, business and industry. People wanted to see protections in place for heritage and agriculture.



## Housing

Creswick offers a range of housing, including small cottages, large heritage houses, suburban development and new houses on large, low density lots. It is popular for people who travel to work in the Ballarat and Creswick corridor.

Creswick's location on transport links between Ballarat and Maryborough supports further residential growth. This is reflected in the Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan.

Council's Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan has identified several housing challenges facing Hepburn Shire:

- Population is growing, and given the large proportion of short-stay accommodation (from our tourism centred economy), there is a high rate of unoccupied dwellings at certain times of the year.
- A lack of diversity in housing types: Creswick has the highest proportion of three-bedroom dwellings in the Shire, with these making up 57% of its dwellings.
- High and rising rents with a lack of long-term rental stock.
- Expensive house prices create a challenge as people's needs change. People can be priced out of their local community and struggle to age in their local community. Reduced affordability can force local workers to move away.
- Creswick has high home ownership rates with over 60 percent of houses being owned outright or with a mortgage.

A draft study of land supply and housing demand found that around 150 additional dwellings will be needed in Creswick by 2041. Creswick has existing capacity to accommodate this housing within the existing town boundaries on vacant lots and through subdivision.

The structure plan could encourage greater housing diversity and affordability in appropriate places so that Creswick's natural and heritage values are protected.



Credit: Hansen Partnership



Credit: Hansen Partnership

### QUESTIONS:

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

**What sorts of housing does your town need?**

Have  
your  
say





## Environment and heritage

Ensuring Creswick 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 with Creswick impacted by a major storm in January 2022.

Future growth and development will be affected by bushfire, flooding and a range of other increased natural hazards. Creswick is surrounded by forest to its east, south and south-west, which increases the bushfire risk.

Protection of human life and risk anticipation are very important guides for Creswick's present and future.

Originally managed by age-old practices of the Traditional Owners, the natural ecosystems of the area have been significantly disturbed by mining, land clearing, grazing and pasture improvement, weed invasion, permanent human settlement and conversion of some forest to plantations.

Remnant vegetation remains within state forests and reserves, in patches on private land, along roadsides and rail reserves. Some revegetation and natural regeneration has taken place along Creswick Creek and gully lines in town. Fragments of nationally endangered vegetation communities occur on the volcanic plains. Endangered species found around Creswick include the Golden Sun Moth, Growling Grass Frog and Grey Goshawk.

There may be opportunities to reinstate traditional land management practices and culturally significant species. The creek and gully lines within town could be further restored to strengthen their capacity to support wildlife. New developments could be sited and designed to protect, facilitate restoration and increase appreciation and enjoyment of the natural ecosystems.

Cultural heritage places of significance exist in and around Creswick, including scar trees, middens, sites of birthing, massacre sites and places of spiritual connection to Country.

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

Creswick's population swelled to 25,000 during the gold rush. It is also the site of the 1882 'New Australasian Mine' disaster, the worst gold mining accident in Australia's history. Its historically significant and intact main street is strongly representative of the gold rush in particular.

Built, natural and cultural heritage is fundamental to its sense of identity. Preserving and protecting these assets will give residents and visitors an opportunity to learn about the past and appreciate its role in Creswick's future.

The Creswick Structure Plan could help conserve these assets, improve appreciation of local history and optimise opportunities for cultural heritage tourism.

Have  
your  
say

### QUESTIONS:

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

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



## Movement and access

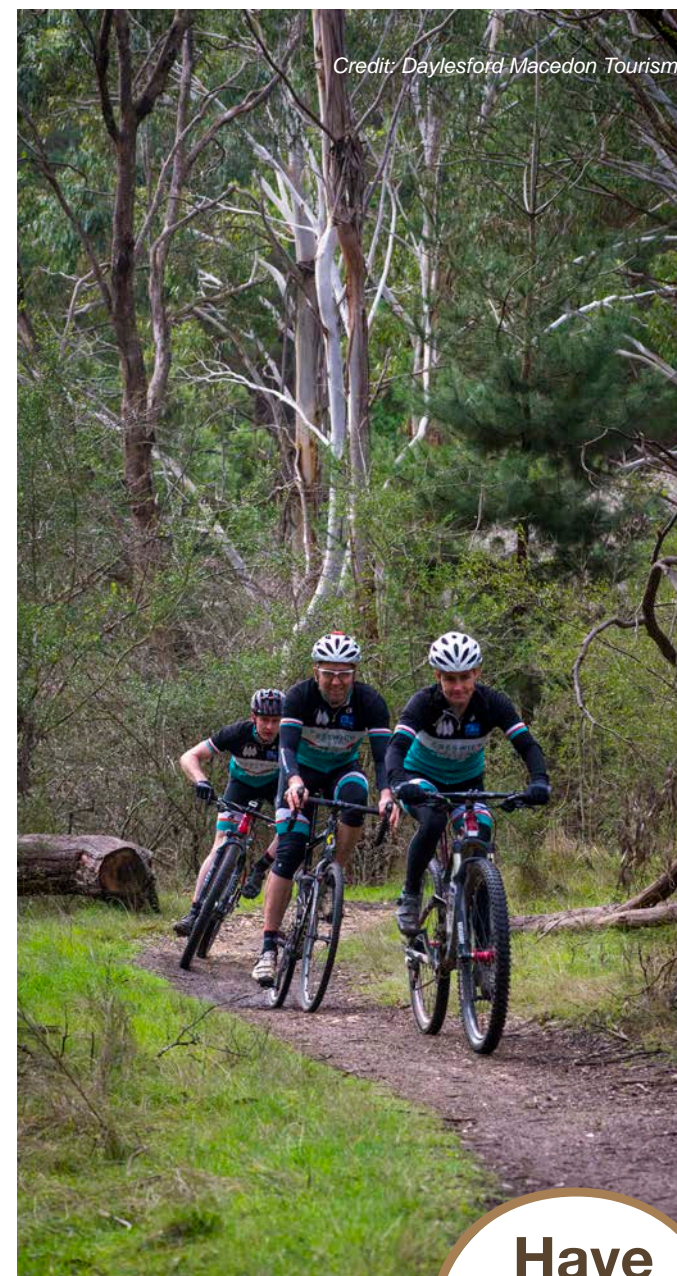
Creswick is located on the Midland Highway, connecting the town to Melbourne and Ballarat as well as the Clunes-Creswick and Creswick-Newstead Roads. There is an hourly bus service to Ballarat, connecting to the Creswick railway station, which in turn is 600m from the Midland Highway. V/Line trains connect to Ballarat/Melbourne and Maryborough via Clunes and Talbot twice-daily. V/Line coach services operate weekdays to Daylesford and Woodend.

Creswick's main street is long with parallel and angle parking. The town centre has local shops and community services. It is generally quiet on weekdays with moderate visitor traffic at weekends. There are significant volumes of through traffic on the Midland Highway, including freight.

Creswick has a low-density population resulting in quite large walk distances to its town centre. Streets often lack footpaths, and there are many unpaved roads with few dedicated cycling facilities.

The Creswick Structure Plan can identify transport opportunities and priorities that:

- Improve conditions for walking and riding, including paths, safer main road crossings and bicycle/e-mobility parking in the town centre.
- Grow Creswick's walking and cycling trails via events and recreation to support economic development at the same time as improving safety for residents.
- Inform an advocacy platform for targeted public transport services.
- Identify priority locations for road improvements and active transport facilities including off road connections to Park Lake gardens and the comprehensive network of walking and mountain bike trails in Creswick Forest.



Have  
your  
say

### QUESTIONS:

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

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



## Community and social assets

Creswick has a wide range of community and social assets, including:

- A preschool and a primary school.
- Council facilities such as the Creswick Council Hub and Library, Creswick Town Hall and Museum, a Neighbourhood Centre and senior citizens centre.
- A small hospital.
- The Doug Lindsay Reserve precinct with a cricket/ football field, two soccer pitches, netball courts and the Creswick Bowling Club.
- A skate park, toddlers' pool and splash park service the town and surrounds.
- The recently completed Hammon Park Trailhead and community facilities.

An Indoor Aquatics Provision Feasibility Study for the whole Shire is underway. There is community desire for provision of a High School.

A range of facilities support the tourism and cultural role of Creswick. This builds on its museums, heritage sites and major events. Significant investment is underway on the Creswick Trails and Hammon Park Trailhead. Further encouragement of facilities to support this will be important for tourism opportunities.

The structure plan could identify priorities for well located and suitable community and social facilities. It could also pinpoint connections between open spaces and walking paths, including the Creswick Trails that can encourage increased usage.



*Credit: Hepburn Shire Council*

### QUESTIONS:

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

**Have your say**



*Credit: Hepburn Shire Council*

## Urban design

Creswick's character and location, surrounded by forested edges, creates a picturesque setting and attracts new residents and workers. From its historic town centre, to its varied residential areas, Creswick's qualities are valued by residents and visitors.

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 houses contributes to the overall character, and create a distinct feeling or sense of place.

In Creswick, properties closer to the town centre have intact late 19th and early 20th century buildings with well-established street trees and gardens. Properties in Creswick to the east are more diverse with varied topography and landscapes. Larger lots are located to the south west which has a more rural character with generous setbacks.

A focus on urban design will build on recent improvements to ensure the Creswick town centre is functional, sustainable and attractive. Well-designed public spaces, buildings, and landscapes will provide a great place to be.

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 centre. These studies will provide a physical framework for managing change and setting new directions over time, while considering community values and needs. Both studies will provide vital input to the structure plan.

The structure plan will explore opportunities to improve connections to nearby open spaces and trails, as well as options for better wayfinding and additional green spaces.



*Credit: Visit Victoria*



*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**



## Business and economy

Creswick's economy is built on agriculture and forestry, the town's history and heritage, and its proximity to Ballarat. On top of commercial forestry, other major employment sectors include education, health, retail, agriculture and hospitality. Employment in agriculture is decreasing, while employment in aged care and social assistance is rising.

Creswick's main street provides a range of shops including a supermarket, pharmacy, local convenience and services, takeaways and restaurants, hardware and other facilities. The Creswick Market, held monthly, draws in additional regional visitors. The needs of tourism and local retail need to be balanced to ensure Creswick is not just a commuter town. Increased employment opportunities within the town will assist with this.

The need for additional commercial floorspace will be driven by population growth. The increase for health and education services that accompanies population growth will be key sectors in Creswick's economy. There is enough capacity within existing commercial land to accommodate future growth, but there is no industrial floorspace or vacant land for industry and manufacturing.

The University of Melbourne's Creswick campus accommodates the School of Forestry and the Mathematical Research Institute (MATRIX). Local staff and students contribute to the viability of retail, recreation and other services.

The structure plan could identify opportunities to enhance Creswick as a university town. Additional tourism opportunities exist with the Creswick Trails, and upcoming Commonwealth Games activities.

The structure plan will explore the need for the supply of land for local industrial activities, future economic development opportunities to reduce commuting and infrastructure.



Credit: Plan2Place Consulting



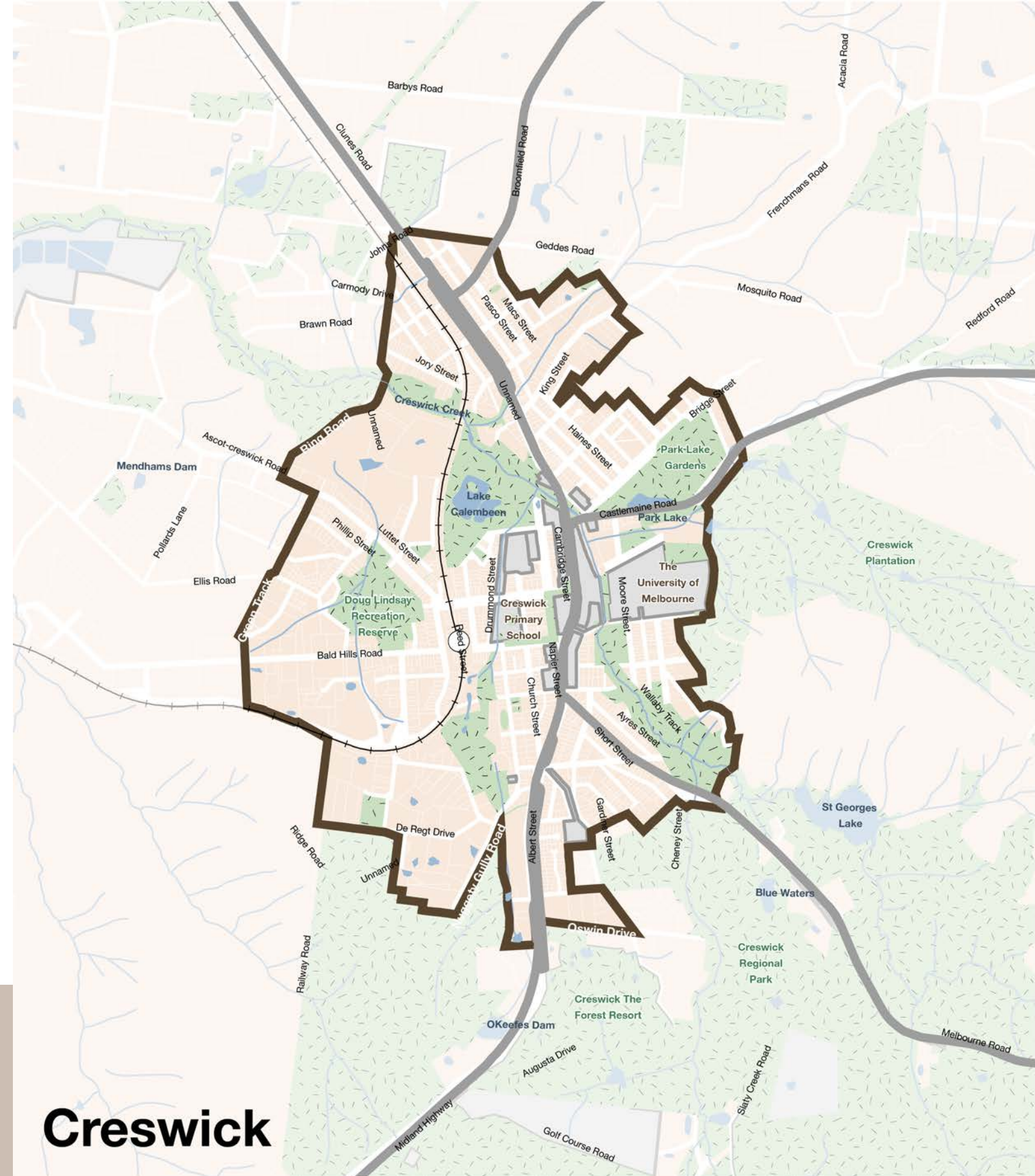
Credit: Plan2Place Consulting

### QUESTIONS:

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

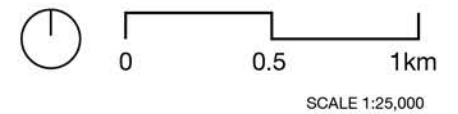
What would make your town more attractive for businesses?

Have  
your  
say



## Creswick

- 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**