

Direction 7

Improve Connections

Building strong, reliable and safe connections within these peri-urban communities, across the region and to metropolitan Melbourne and beyond, will allow for greater choice in terms of employment, recreation, education and cultural activities. It also helps to reduce the isolation of small towns and farm living.

Better local physical connections expand opportunities for recreation and active lifestyles, and enhanced community safety and social interaction, while improved telecommunications are important in connecting home-based and local businesses, and in reducing the need to travel.



Key Ideas

Improve physical connections

There is an identified need to provide safe, accessible, fit-for-purpose and reliable roads, pathways and trails, and improved public transport to employment, recreation and services.

Key areas to influence include:

- safe connections that link communities to employment, services and their day-to-day needs
- road and pathway access to Kinglake National Park for visitors
- safe movement in the event of bushfires and extreme weather events
- public transport connections between services
- connecting and strengthening linkages within and between towns, and to neighbourhood nodes

Address telecommunications infrastructure gaps

Reliable and up-to-date local and regional telecommunications underpin stronger social and economic outcomes in the region. Key areas to be addressed in infrastructure and service quality include mobile phone reception, broadband availability, television reception, radio reception and emergency services communications.

Telecommunications assists in:

- connecting people to social networks, health services and learning opportunities
- providing people with greater access to information and community safety
- enabling businesses to compete more effectively in the marketplace

Create opportunities for social connectedness

The public and informal spaces that create opportunities for social gatherings and informal communication within towns and neighbourhood nodes are important in creating incidental opportunities for people to connect and belong in their communities.

Social connectedness can be assisted by:

- signage and place names
- enhancing the community character and identity of town centres
- providing for local public spaces and parks
- providing access to information through libraries, community noticeboards
- providing access to broadband

Next Steps

There are a number of ways in which the Directions outlined in this discussion paper could be achieved. The strategies to implement the Directions will be further developed and form part of the draft Kinglake Ranges, Flowerdale and Toolangi Plan and Design Framework, to be released for public exhibition and feedback late in 2010.

Key strategies for implementing the Directions could include:

1. the Murrindindi Planning Scheme which provides the framework for decision-making regarding future land use and development within the study area. The planning scheme can be amended to support the implementation of the directions identified within this document, including through:
 - the adoption of landscape protection strategies and controls to safeguard the high valued landscape character of particular areas
 - the preparation of design guidelines and land use strategies for landscape buffers and transitions between built-up areas and open rural landscapes
 - providing policy support for key initiatives including innovative residential design
 - the adoption of design frameworks for towns and settlements
 - a settlement containment strategy and design frameworks to consolidate and better manage growth within existing settlements
2. Support can be provided for a sustainable local economy through the adoption of a marketable, unifying brand for the area, with suggestions for such a brand including “Melbourne’s playground of the north”.
3. Support for local business can also be provided through improved telecommunications services and planning and land use strategies that encourage small businesses in commercial/retail precincts, via home based business or in specific locations.
4. The wellbeing of local communities can be improved through the preparation of a strategy for sustainable local service and facility provision; and design

frameworks to guide improvements to the look and feel of town centres. This will require coordination between government and private sector service providers to develop new models of service delivery in relation to health services and education appropriate to the location and community needs. Improved physical and technological connectivity and providing space for community and cultural celebrations is also important.

5. A collaborative approach between Victorian and local government and service providers will be required to realise the Directions identified in this document. One good example of this is the rebuilding of visitor facilities within the Kinglake National Park for which a Draft Masterplan has recently been exhibited for public comment. If improved connections between the settlements of the Kinglake Ranges and the Kinglake National Park blocks are to be achieved co-ordination between this plan and the Masterplan will be essential. Likewise co-ordination will be essential between emergency service providers such as the SES, CFA, Victoria Police, Council and VicRoads to achieve improvements to the safety of local communities.

Major infrastructure initiatives in telecommunications and precinct wide waste water management will require government support.

Integrated bushfire planning can be improved through the implementation of the Integrated Fire Management Planning Process and the implementation of the recommendations of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission.

An implementation strategy will be developed as part of the draft Plan and Design Framework working with all levels of government and responsible agencies.

The Future Directions Paper will provide a basis for engaging with local communities and government and other stakeholders in a discussion about the future of the Kinglake Ranges, Flowerdale and Toolangi areas, prior to the release of the draft Plan and Design Framework late in 2010.

The next step in the planning process involves:

Testing scenario options for the future

This will involve discussions with local communities about the scenarios that could help to realise the Directions outlined in this statement.

The scenarios will test options for future land use, the development of towns and settlements and the role of buffers and landscape corridors.

Design Frameworks

This will involve developing with the community local area design frameworks to guide future development and improvements in town centres, neighbourhood nodes and at gateways to the Kinglake National Park.

You can participate in community discussions at:

A Community Briefing on Saturday 2 October at the Kinglake RAC 10.30am - 1.00pm

Flowerdale and Hazeldene	Saturday 2 October 2.30–4.30pm	Spring Valley Recreation
Toolangi and Castella	Tuesday 5 October 7-9pm	Toolangi Community Hall
Kinglake	Sunday 10 October 10.30am-12.30pm	Kinglake RAC
Kinglake West & Pheasant Creek	Sunday 10 October 1.30 pm – 3.30 pm	Kinglake West Mechanics Institute

For further information:

View the most up-to-date information and join a community discussion about the Plan and Design Framework at www.kftplan.com.au

Go to the VBRRRA and Shire of Murrindindi websites: <http://www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au/rebuilding-kinglake-ranges/plan.html> or www.murrindindi.vic.gov.au

Visit the Kinglake Ranges RAC to view information and displays. Project staff will also be available to answer questions and hear your comments at the Kinglake Ranges RAC on Thursdays between 10am and 2pm throughout October.

If you wish to ring project staff to discuss the project or make an appointment, please call Michael Dunn on 9653 8520 / 0431 195 471 or email michael.dunn@aecom.com