

Foster Structure Plan

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Prepared by the South Gippsland Shire Council in collaboration with Planning by Design

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1. Introduction

This Structure Plan is designed to provide a strategic framework for the future physical development of Foster over the next 20 years. It also provides a broader assessment of opportunities and issues that will need to be considered for the time period beyond the 20 year horizon. The plan provides the foundation for the pursuit of more detailed statutory planning provisions, amendments to the Planning Scheme as well as design and development initiatives, for specific areas and activities in the town. It will also guide Council policies, programs and initiatives relating to community, economic, social, environmental, and physical initiatives.

The Structure Plan identifies a future vision for the town that captures the community's objectives and aspirations for Foster. It also provides a series of planning, design or development objectives that will be pursued in order for the vision to be attained. The plan will identify key roles and functions for the town to fulfil in order to meet the needs of its local community and the broader population of the region.

The Structure Plan acknowledges the extent of work that the Foster community has already undertaken identifying their future aspirations, goals and objectives and specific actions, especially the Planning for Real exercise. It aims to build upon this work and contribute to the implementation of the community objectives by creating an effective, integrated and coordinated vehicle through which to pursue them.

The plan has been prepared by Planning by Design (planning consultants) under the direction of the South Gippsland Shire Council, Strategic Planning Unit. Input has been received and provided from all other relevant Council departments, government agencies, authorities and infrastructure providers, and the Foster community.

The Local Structure Plan identifies:

- Areas in and around Foster that are considered suitable for future residential development, industrial development and commercial development.
- Existing areas of Foster where opportunity exists to change or intensify development.
- Current and future pedestrian, cycle, traffic and transport links, routes and facilities.
- Areas of environmental importance.
- Foster's Town Centre and the specific issues and opportunities it faces, recognising the critical and ongoing social, economic and environmental roles that the Town Centre will have in the future of Foster.

It is important to note that the Structure Plan itself will not provide all the details of how these initiatives will be pursued. This will be the subject of future more detailed projects undertaken as part of its ongoing implementation.

2. Foster now and into the future

2.1 Introduction to Foster.

Foster is an attractive, vibrant and compact township that sits along the Stockyard Creek surrounded by the hills and rural environment of South Gippsland, close to the coast of Corner Inlet. It is a major gateway to the Wilsons Promontory National Park and has a strong and compact Town Centre, which offers a broad variety of goods, services and facilities. Foster is also emerging as a tourist accommodation centre.

With a current population of 1,078, Foster is the largest urban settlement in the eastern section of the South Gippsland Shire. Foster is an important business, education, health and community centre for its region. It is situated off the South Gippsland Highway and is a major service point for Wilsons Promontory National Park.

The population of Foster has declined slightly in recent years and the town has a comparatively high representation of older age groups. Population projections for Foster indicate an anticipated population of 1,120 by 2016 and 1,250 by 2026, indicating a constant, but low growth rate.

This population increase will create demand, by 2026 for:

- 190 Additional new dwellings (average 10 per annum)
- 0.5Ha of land for future retail/commercial/Town Centre related activities
- 4Ha of land for future industrial facilities
- 36Ha of land for future rural residential development (figures derived from Essential Economics 2007)

2.2 Future Roles and Functions for Foster

With an anticipated residential population of 1,250 in the year 2026, Foster will have the capacity to maintain and extend its roles as:

- An attractive, sustainable and vibrant small town and residential location.
- A tourism destination and accommodation centre.
- A retail and business centre for the local community as well as visitors to Wilsons Promontory.
- A local community services and facilities hub.
- A local community health, education, entertainment and recreation centre.
- A local industrial and rural services hub serving the coastal regions of South Gippsland.

2.3 Driving Principles and Future Visions

In order for Foster to fulfil these roles it will be necessary to identify a "preferred future" for the town and uphold a range of driving principles which will influence the way Foster develops, the style of development that is attracted, the priority in which initiatives are pursued and the strategies and policies that are developed in order to manage the future of the town.

Foster, over the next 20 years will develop as:

- A sustainable, small rural township situated within an idyllic setting on the banks of the Stockyard Creek.
- Having a vibrant Town Centre adjacent to Stockyard Creek.
- Having a strong and distinctive sense of community pride that reflects the rich cultural, social and environmental heritage of the town.
- A community where all residents have access to quality pedestrian and cycle networks linking them to key services and facilities.
- Providing its community with a quality health, sporting, education, leisure, recreation and social facilities.
- Providing residential accommodation for all age groups, family types and lifestyles.
- An attractive and vibrant centre where tourists choose to stop and spend time on their way to regional attractions.
- Having a sustainable economy, which provides employment to the local community and region.
- A community that minimises energy requirements and is committed to environmentally sustainable development principles.

It is also important to consider that Foster will never be "completed". Its location and environmental attributes will make it an attractive urban settlement far beyond the lifespan of this document. With this in mind it is essential that opportunities for further, long term development, investment and activity are provided for in the Structure Plan.

2.4 Issues and opportunities

Key issues identified by the community and other agencies during the preparation of this plan were:

- The need to enhance the environment of Stockyard Creek and strengthen its role as a major attribute and access / environmental / habitat corridor through the town.
- The need to provide opportunities for "lifestyle" residential accommodation in the elevated and undulating areas around the town that afford views and vistas over the surrounding area.
- The need to ensure that future development occurs in a logical and systematic manner that makes the most efficient use of infrastructure.
- The need to ensure that all residential development is appropriately linked to the Town Centre and other community focal points, facilitating pedestrian and bicycle access.
- The need to maintain a strong consolidated Town Centre adjacent to the Creek.
- The opportunity to extend the Town Centre across the creek integrating it with the schools, recreation areas and the Council Depot.
- The need to review the zoning and preferred activities at the northern entry to the town.
- The need to consolidate industrial activities around the existing industrial estate.
- The need to improve the heavy vehicle bypass of the Town Centre.

3. Structure Plan Themes

3.1 Future Development and Activity in the town

3.1.1 Residential

Relevant issues and information

The current zoning pattern, coupled with the demand assessments suggests that Foster has ample land to accommodate future residential activities. Most of the currently undeveloped Residentially zoned land is however flat and not offering views and vistas to surrounding countryside, hence not likely to be attractive to people seeking undulating properties which provide views or outlooks to the surrounding rural areas. The Structure Plan needs to ensure that an adequate amount of future residential land to cater for residents wishing to live in traditional township locations and those that wish to live in a rural environment. To conserve the compact, accessible nature of Foster it is essential that all future residential locations be connected with the town centre, existing residential areas and other key facilities.

Objective

To ensure that there is sufficient amount of appropriately located land zoned to meet the expectations of current and future residents of Foster including those who wish to live close to the Town Centre and those who wish to live in a lower residential density development further from the Town Centre by providing a range of allotment sizes and topographical attributes. Ensure that all future residential development is well connected to existing residential areas, the Town Centre and other key facilities and services in the town.

- 1. Ensure at all times that there is a sufficient appropriately zoned residential land to provide for 10 years of anticipated residential demand, catering both for residents seeking urban or sustainable rural residential lifestyles.
- 2. Prefer higher density residential development with two or more dwellings on an urban residential site, on sites within a 200m radius of the Town Centre.
- 3. Require the preparation of Outline Development Plans for all residential subdivisions to ensure that the design of new estates relate to the existing access and infrastructure systems and will enable future development stages to occur in logical and efficient manners.
- 4. Ensure that rural residential subdivisions are environmentally sustainable, self sufficient in regards to infrastructure, services, drainage and waste disposal.

- 5. Ensure that rural residential development and subdivisions will not disrupt or restrict existing agricultural and rural activities from operating and legitimately expanding.
- 6. Ensure that residential subdivision proceeds in a fashion that recognises and protects existing environmental features, large stands of trees, native vegetation areas, native animal habitats and movement corridors, water courses and drainage areas and provides appropriate interfaces with public land and rural activities.
- 7. Ensure that the staging of future residential subdivision proceeds in an efficient and logical manner and rezoning and subdivision approvals have regard to the locations relative proximity to, and linkages with, the Town Centre and its capacity to integrate with existing services, facilities and established residential areas, road infrastructure, services, pedestrian and cycle access ways.
- 8. Consider specific opportunities that accords with the strategies for the following areas (see Structure Plan map):

Plan	Description	Comments
ref	1	
A	Area of Farming Zoned land north of Coopers Street and west of Gibbs Street	Partially developed for rural residential with some opportunity for further development. Rezone to rural residential. Further subdivision should commence from the southern edge.
В	Area of Farming Zoned land south of Coopers Road and north of Davis Street.	Largely vacant land suited to future rural residential development when required. Subdivision to commence from the eastern edge. Sensitive development of the lower (flatter) portions of this area may allow for 'future urban residential' however this should only be supported with an appropriate development plan.
С	Area of Farming zoned land west of Hoddle Road and north of Cemetery.	Largely vacant moderately undulating land suited to future urban residential development when required. Subdivision to commence from the eastern boundary adjoining the established urban area whilst recognising the importance of maintaining an appropriate township approach.
D	Area of Farming Zoned land south of Cemetery and west of Hoddle Road.	Largely vacant land suited to future rural residential development when required. Subdivision to commence from the eastern edge.
Е	Area of farming zoned land to east of Hoddle Road and south of rural residential development.	Largely vacant land suited to future rural residential development when required. Subdivision to commence from the northern edge. See Comments on 'L'.
F	Area of farming zoned land south of Hoddle Road.	Largely vacant land suited to future rural residential development when required. Subdivision to commence from the northern edge. Area has lower priority than area D to the north.
G	Area of Farming Zoned land west of Stockyard Creek and north of Rail Trail.	Largely vacant flat land suited to future urban residential development when required. Subdivision to commence from the northern edge.
K	Area of Farming zoned land south of Hoddle Road adjacent to Rail Trail.	Largely vacant land suited to future rural residential development when required. Subdivision to commence from the northern edge. Area has lower priority than areas F and D to the north.

L	Area of Farming Zoned	Largely vacant land suited to future rural residential
	land west of Stockyard	development when required. The boundary between area G
	Creek and north of Rail	and the eastern boundaries of E and L are based on an
	Trail.	existing lot boundary and not a physical feature. Should
		aggressive development of area G occur, the extension of
		'future residential' into the western areas of E and L may
		warrant consideration.

3.1.2 Commercial and Retail

Relevant issues and information.

Research undertaken for this Structure Plan indicates that the Foster town centre, the major commercial and retail location in the town, is vibrant, compact, currently operating well and providing an appropriate range of goods, services and facilities for the local population and visitors. Economic analysis, based on future population projections and Foster's role as a tourism centre, indicate that an additional 4000m²-5000 m² of land will be required to accommodate retail and commercial floorspace and associated parking will be required to meet demand. Opportunity exists to provide such facilities within or through small expansion of the current town centre. A fundamental principle of the Structure Plan establishes the primacy of Foster Town Centre as the location for all major retail, business, community, civic, cultural, social, tourism services and facilities. It is therefore essential that all major commercial and retail development occur within or adjacent to the town centre.

Objectives

- To maintain the primacy of the Foster Town Centre as the preferred location for all retail and commercial activities in the town.
- To provide as broad a range of commercial and retail goods, services and facilities for the Foster community and visitors in a central, easily accessible and sustainable location.

- 1. Ensure that adequate and appropriate land is available to accommodate additional commercial and retail development within the Town Centre.
- Require retail and commercial development that seeks to develop outside of the Foster Town Centre to clearly demonstrate why it is inappropriate for the development and or activity to occur in the Town Centre, or that adequate land to accommodate the facility is not available within the Foster Town Centre.
- 3. Review the zoning on existing commercial areas beyond the Town Centre to discourage development and activity that could be accommodated in the Town Centre.

4. Consider proposals that accord with these strategies in following locations (see Structure Plan map):

Plan	Description	Comments
ref		
J	Council Depot and water authority	Site currently zoned for Public Purposes has potential
	office on Pioneer Street.	to accommodate future Town Centre related activities.
		Site worthy of further investigation subject to
		intentions of current land users.

3.1.3 Industrial Development

Relevant issues and information.

The majority of industrial and associated activity in Foster is currently located in an industrial estate to the south east of the town adjacent to the former railway station. This location is well located to accommodate current and future industrial and associated activities for Foster and the surrounding areas. The potential future development of Barrys Beach could produce opportunities for additional industrial development in Foster. The existing industrial zone has capacity to accommodate foreseeable demand for industrial development. Opportunity also exists to expand the industrial area, once fully developed, on adjoining land further to south. Some light industrial / service business activities are occurring in the mixed-use zone adjoining the heavy vehicle bypass to the north of the town centre. Whilst some light industrial /service business are appropriate for this location given its access to the highway and heavy vehicle route, the area should not be permitted to develop as an alternative to the identified industrial area.

Objective

- To accommodate the industrial and allied activities required to support the Foster community and economy and to provide local employment in an efficient and integrated fashion in the industrial area on the eastern edge of the town.
- To accommodate appropriate supporting industrial development associated with the proposed Barrys Beach port facility within Foster.

- 1. Facilitate and direct industrial and allied development to the existing industrial area.
- 2. Identify land adjoining the current industrial zone to accommodate future industrial expansion.
- 3. Review the zoning of areas of industrial activity/ service business in the town, other than the Industrial Estate.

4. Consider applications to rezone areas to facilitate industrial development, beyond the capacity of the existing Industrial Zone, that accord with the strategies, in the following locations (see Structure Plan map):

Plan ref	Description	Comments
Н	Farming zoned land south of existing	Consider future rezoning to Industrial when required.
	industrial estate on Fuller Road.	

3.1.4 Open Space Recreation Public Land

Relevant issues and information.

South Gippsland Shire has recently completed an open space and recreation study of the shire. This study identifies the following initiatives for Foster relevant to the Structure Plan:

- 1. Establish connections from crown reserve 36 to the rail trail 40 and to the Stockyard Creek returning to the crown land in the north to create a circuit of trails for exercise, recreation and environmental appreciation.
- 2. Retain the Strzelecki and North Foster lookouts.
- 3. Extend the rail trail.
- 4. Allow for the expansion of tennis club in Pioneer Street as demand arises.
- 5. Provide incentives to consolidate cricket and football on the main showground sports reserve.
- 6. Provide a small street skating area at the skate park and review the condition, management and future development of the skate park, including the metal half pipe.
- 7. Implement the Showground Master Plan.
- 8. Implement the findings of the Foster basketball facility feasibility study.
- 9. Encourage sports clubs and the secondary school to work more closely.

Objective

To ensure that the Foster community has adequate access to appropriately located range of recreation and open space facilities and that the public land in and around the town is maintained and protected.

Strategies

1. Implement the recommendations of the Recreation and Open Space Strategy and the Planning for Real initiatives that accord with the strategic directions of this Structure Plan.

3.1.5 Health and Education

Relevant issues and information

Foster is serviced by a public hospital (see 'M' on Structure Plan Map) and public primary and secondary school (see 'N' on Structure Plan Map). The Secondary School (College) has recently completed an extensive redevelopment that further establishes the school as a leading secondary education facility in the eastern half of the municipality. There are currently no plans to undertake any significant redevelopment or expansion works at either the Primary School or the Hospital.

Notwithstanding, the Structure Plan acknowledges the importance of the health and education precincts to the town and surrounding areas. The Hospital is benefited by extensive land holdings that offer the potential to secure any long term plans to expand health service provision.

Objective

To ensure the Foster community retain access to quality public health and education services at the established facilities.

Strategies

Ensure that developments adjoining and surrounding the Foster Hospital and primary and secondary schools precincts are compatible with, and do not restrict the operations of these facilities.

3.2 Water, Sewerage and Electricity Services.

Relevant issues and information.

Water Supply

Water availability and consumption are and will remain to be major factors in the future development of Foster. The Shire of South Gippsland is committed to being a "water wise" municipality and establishing sustainable communities throughout the municipality. Water is identified as a key strategic agenda item in the South Gippsland Economic Development Strategy.

South Gippsland Water (SGW) has advised that the current shortages of water in the region should not be used as a primary determinant of population growth. The water authority indicates that there is opportunity for Foster to continue to grow in line with projected growth rates.

Electricity Provisions

Current electrical supply is sufficient for the current population, however future expansion will require incremental increases to supply infrastructure. No major problems are anticipated with this expected supply expansion.

Sewerage

South Gippsland Water have advised that the current sewerage infrastructure is adequate and opportunity exists for the system to be extended to service the areas identified for future urban development in the current Structure Plan and planning scheme.

Objective

To ensure that Foster develops in a sustainable fashion that will make the most efficient use of available infrastructure and minimise requirements for additional water, sewerage, power or drainage resources and infrastructure, in line with the South Gippsland Shire "water wise" and sustainable communities policies.

- 1. Require that environmentally sustainable principles be achieved in all subdivision and development.
- 2. Prefer residential development that can be developed utilising existing infrastructure.

- 3. Ensure that development occurs in a logical and incremental fashion to prevent infrastructure services having to cross undeveloped areas in order to reach isolated pockets of development.
- 4. Encourage the appropriate use of grey water, the installation of water tanks and the use of drought tolerant plants and landscapes throughout the town.

3.3 Access and movement

3.3.1 Vehicular traffic and car parking

Relevant issues and information.

The key traffic issues identified for Foster are:

To improve signage of the Heavy Vehicle Access route through the town and to ensure that the access route is suitably configured to facilitate easy safe access by heavy vehicles.

To improve access and awareness of parking areas in the Town Centre and ensure that adequate parking spaces are available for use by cars, caravans and tourist buses.

O'Brien Traffic recommend a parking ratio of 4 spaces per 100sqm of gross leasable floorspace be applied for all land use activities in the Town Centre and wherever practical, such spaces be provided in safe, easily accessible, shared locations.

Objectives

- To facilitate vehicular trips to, and through the town in an orderly, logical and safe manner.
- To facilitate the safe and easy movement through the town for heavy vehicles.
- To make Foster Town Centre a safe, attractive and inviting place for visitors and tourists to access by motor vehicle.
- To ensure that adequate parking facilities are available, appropriately located throughout the town to provide safe, secure and accessible parking for cars, buses, caravans and trucks.

- 1. Improve the design and raise awareness of the existing heavy vehicle bypass of the Town Centre.
- 2. Prefer shared carparking facilities in the Town Centre to maximise efficient use of space and minimise the overall number of car parking spaces required.
- 3. Require parking to be provided to support Town Centre activities at a rate of 4 spaces per 100m² of gross leasable floorspace.
- 4. Improve the signage and access arrangements to the off street parking areas.

3.3.2 Pedestrian and cyclists

Relevant issues and information.

All major features and facilities in a town the size of Foster should be easily accessible for pedestrians and cyclists. The Rail Trail and existing path network provide excellent foundations upon which to develop an integrated pedestrian and cycle network for the town.

It is important to note that the proposed 'Future Walking / Cycling Connections' routes identified on the Structure Plan map are indicative in their depiction of how areas should be connected. They are not designed to indicate precise locations and do not identify land to be acquired by Council for this purpose.

Objectives

To establish Foster as a "walkable community" with all key activities being accessible from all residential areas by foot or non motorised transport by providing safe secure and attractive walking and cycling paths that link all parts of the town and will enable and encourage walking and cycling as an alternative to motor vehicles.

- 1. Identify locations for safe, secure and attractive pedestrian and cycle paths through the town that will link key features, facilities, schools, sporting and recreation facilities and the Town Centre with all residential areas, hence establishing a Pedestrian and Cycle network for the town.
- 2. Require all new residential subdivisions to be connected to the pedestrian and cycling network.
- 3. Provide facilities to secure bicycles at key facilities, require bicycle parking to be provided in all new developments.

3.4 Natural Environment

Relevant issues and information.

Foster is fortunate to be nestled in a highly attractive natural environment. It is essential that the future growth and development of the town does not jeopardise its idyllic setting and natural environmental surroundings.

Objective

To manage, protect and enhance the natural environmental areas in and around Foster, especially the Crown land reserves to the east and the environs of Stockyard Creek.

- 1. Ensure that future rezoning for residential expansion of the town does not jeopardise the natural environment, significant native vegetation or the habitat of native fauna.
- 2. Recognise the significance of Stockyard Creek as the central feature of the town and improve the relationship and awareness of the creek from the Town Centre.
- 3. Regenerate the natural environment of Stockyard Creek whilst providing opportunities for appropriate access and enjoyment of the area by the community.

3.5 Specific locations and features

3.5.1 Foster Town Centre

Relevant issues and information.

The Town Centre of Foster represents the focal point for all urban activities, services and facilities in the town. Its ongoing viability is fundamental to the overall sustainability of the Foster community from a social, environmental and economic perspective.

Objective

To maintain the primacy of the Foster Town Centre as the location for retail, business, leisure, entertainment, community, civic, cultural activities, services and facilities.

Specific issues facing the Foster Town Centre are:

- Signage to the Town Centre from the truck by-pass and on approaches to the town.
- The relationship of the Centre to the creek as a major environmental feature of the town.
- Opportunities to improve linkages from the Town Centre to the Rail Trail.
- The hidden nature of the car parking facilities.

- 1. Ensure that the Planning Scheme directs and facilitates the Town Centre as the preferred location for all appropriate retail, social, community, commercial and entertainment facilities.
- 2. Pursue an integrated approach to the management of the Town Centre as an entity and recognise that the centre will require ongoing support and direction.
- 3. Maintain a compact Town Centre with all features within easy walking distance of the main intersection.
- 4. Improve signage to the Town Centre on surrounding roads and the Rail Trail.
- 5. Improve the environment of the creek and embrace the creek as a focal point of the Town Centre.
- **6.** Investigate opportunities for the Town Centre to expand to the west of Stockyard Creek to improve integration between the Town Centre and the sporting, education and community facilities located to the west of the creek.

3.5.2 Entry Points

Relevant issues and information.

Foster is located off the South Gippsland Highway. This provides the need to "mark" Foster's existence on the highway in order to attract passing traffic and trade. Potential also exists however, for inappropriate development to spread to the highway creating an unattractive image and entrance to the town.

Objectives

To ensure that the entry points to Foster create a welcoming and attractive impression of the town that reflects the heritage and future aspirations of the Foster community.

Strategies

Review Planning Scheme zoning of land at the South Gippsland Highway entrance to Foster.

3.5.3 Rail Trail

Relevant issues and information.

The Rail Trail is a major tourism and access opportunity for Foster that is likely to attract additional tourists to the town. The trail also establishes a strong east west pedestrian and bicycle connection for the town that can be used to improve access and circulation for the local community. The future extension of the Rail Trail towards Toora and beyond, will further cement the importance of Foster to the regional operation of the Rail Trail.

Objectives

To recognise the Rail Trail as an important tourism and access feature for the town and integrate it into the future development of the town as a pedestrian and cycle link for use by the community as well as tourists and visitors.

Strategies

To provide pedestrian and cycle access to the rail trail from new adjoining residential developments

4. Implementation of the Plan

4.1 Incorporation of the Structure Plan into the Planning Scheme

The Structure Plan will be incorporated into the Planning Scheme in the Municipal Strategic Statement through the preparation of a Planning Scheme amendment that will introduce a summary page, identifying the key aspects of the plan and provides reference to the Structure Plan documents and physical framework plan which captures the essential elements of the Structure Plan. These documents and the Planning Scheme amendment will be produced following the final adoption of the Structure Plan by Council.

4.2 Further Strategic Work.

Ref	Description
FSW1	Review Mixed Use Zone at the northern entrance to Foster.
FSW2	Strategic investigation of specific site and precincts identified in the
	Structure Plan.
FSW3	Prepare a pedestrian and cycle access strategy for Foster in accordance
	with the Open Space Strategy and Recreation Strategy.

4.3 Actions.

Ref	Description
F1	Prepare, following formal Council adoption of the Structure Plan, a
	Planning Scheme amendment to introduce the driving principles of the
	Structure Plan into the South Gippsland planning Scheme.
F2	Improve signage of the Heavy Vehicle traffic bypass.
F3	Prepare Physical Framework, business plan and development prospectus
	for the Foster Town Centre.
F4	Continue implementation of the Planning for Real initiatives, consistent
	with the recommendations and directions of the Structure Plan.
F5	Prepare a Car Parking Strategy for the Town Centre.