

Planisphere 2011

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PROJECT CONTROL

Status	Version	Checked PM	Checked PD	Date released
Meeniyan Structure Plan - Draft Discussion Paper	1	CR	JLR	28/10/10
Meeniyan Structure Plan – Consultation Draft	2	CR	JLR	11/10/10
Meeniyan Structure Plan – Final for Adoption	3	CR		

Note: The Meeniyan Structure Plan was initially adopted by Council in August 2011. Implementation of the Structure Plan into the Planning Scheme occurred via Planning Scheme Amendment C72. The Independent Planning Panel appointed to consider submissions to Amendment C72 recommended the Meeniyan Structure Plan be updated to respond to the Panel's recommendations. The 'Meeniyan Structure Plan – updated June 2013' fulfils this requirement.

Should inconsistencies exist between the Structure Plan and the implemented Meeniyan Planning Scheme Provisions, the Planning Scheme provisions take priority.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The South Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of this land, Elders, past and present, their spirits and ancestors.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Overview

South Gippsland Shire Council and Regional Development Victoria have appointed Planisphere Urban Strategy Planners in conjunction with Urban Enterprise (Economic and Tourism Planning) to prepare a Structure Plan for the township of Meeniyan. The Structure Plan will provide direction for the growth and development of Meeniyan to 2025 and beyond.

Council and the Meeniyan community have recently prepared the *Meeniyan Community Plan 2010*, which provides a vision for the future planning and development of the township. The vision and directions of the plan have provided important background material for the development of this Structure Plan.

A draft Meeniyan Structure Plan was exhibited over a four week period in January and February 2011. An Information Session was held on Sunday 30th January at the Meeniyan Public Hall, and feedback sought via a Community Bulletin, Feedback Form and online information on Council's website. The feedback received has informed the preparation of this Meeniyan Structure Plan.

1.2 Strategic Context

The Victorian State Government recently released Ready for Tomorrow – A Blueprint for Regional and Rural Victoria. The 'Blueprint' is a policy to promote and manage growth in key regional centres, and support investment in rural and regional Victoria. This policy is an important consideration for Meeniyan as development of a strategic plan such as a Structure Plan will provide a platform to leverage investment opportunities that are being made available to achieve the Blueprint's objectives.

There has been no previous strategic planning framework prepared for Meeniyan, however a report titled *Development Forecasts for Meeniyan* was prepared by Tim Nott (economic consultant) in April 2010. Further direction is required to address contemporary policy priorities, and the enhanced development potential associated with roll out of the South Gippsland Water reticulated sewerage scheme in Meeniyan in 2011. To date, growth of the township has been

restricted by the inability to provide effective domestic and commercial waste water treatment.

Development Forecasts for Meeniyan (Nott, 2010) identified the following issues relevant to preparation of this Structure Plan for Meeniyan:

- The township is to be sewered. South Gippsland Water expects to complete the Meeniyan Sewerage Scheme in the latter half of 2011 at a cost of \$5 million (South Gippsland Water, 2009). This will allow a more urban style development with smaller lot sizes, enabling greater diversity of housing choices and more people to live in the township. This may change the existing socio-economic patterns in the township.
- Recent urban housing development demonstrates demand. There is evidence of demand for new housing at urban densities in Meeniyan, including housing on lots as small as 500 sq m. There is also ongoing demand for rural residential development around the town.
- Meeniyan can provide rural/small town lifestyles for 'tree-changers'. Meeniyan has a range of small-town services including cultural and entertainment activities and is in reasonable proximity to higher order services at Leongatha and the attractions of Wilsons Promontory.
- More extensive urban development will require infrastructure services to be provided. Sewerage is not the only additional infrastructure required for urban development. Extensions to reticulated water, storm water, roads, energy and telecommunications services may also be required. Fairly apportioning the cost of these services between new residents and existing residents who benefit from them will be an important issue.
- ♦ More residents will generate greater demand for commercial and community services. The level of service provided locally will depend on the number of additional people that move into the township and surrounds. The provision of new services − more shops, doctors, community services, etc − is triggered at various threshold populations, and will also depend on the location and quality of competing services.

A further issue is the current land use controls (zoning) applied to Meeniyan, which include the Township Zone under the *South Gippsland Planning Scheme*. The Township Zone is applied to the urban area of a township and provides for a wide range of residential, business and semi-industrial uses. In the absence of reticulated sewerage, the need to provide for on-site waste water treatment

requires large lot sizes and limits the intensity of land uses; meaning that the Township Zone provides an adequate level of control. However, in sewered areas the zone does not enable Council to adequately manage incompatible and inappropriate land uses within a township, or implement a strategic plan.

It is Council's intention to replace the current Township Zone with an appropriate suite of zone and overlay controls to reflect the land use framework identified and contained in this Meenivan Structure Plan.

Council and the Meeniyan community have recently prepared the *Meeniyan Community Plan*, which outlines the vision the community has for the future planning and development of the township. The community plan has been used to inform the development of the Meeniyan Structure Plan.

In addition to the *Meeniyan Community Plan* and the Structure Plan, the Gardiner Foundation and the Department of Planning and Community Development have recently announced the commencement of the Meeniyan cluster towns project. The project aims to:

"build the ongoing capabilities of small communities (of less than 5,000 people) to direct and support their own advancement; develop skills needed to cope with the significant changes to the local economy and demographic change; attract and retain investment and therefore directly contribute to the growth and resilience of their communities and the dairy industry and emerging business opportunities". (Gardiner Foundation, 2010)

Meeniyan and Fish Creek are the main townships in the study area. The preparation of the Meeniyan Structure Plan and its subsequent inclusion in the *South Gippsland Planning Scheme* will assist implementation of any land use and development initiatives for Meeniyan secured through the cluster towns project.

1.3 Meeniyan Study Area

Situated between Leongatha and Foster, Meeniyan is 150 km south east of Melbourne, 16.9 km east of Leongatha and 21.9 km west of Foster (refer to context map on page 3). Meeniyan is a traditional small Gippsland township with a commercial heart that straddles the town's main thoroughfare, the South Gippsland Highway. The commercial area is surrounded by residential development, predominantly to the south of the highway. This residential development decreases in density the further the distance from the town centre, particularly where the topography gets steeper.

The town acts as a service centre for nearby agricultural communities and plays an important tourism role - the towns bills itself as "The Turning Point' to Wilson's Promontory. The Meeniyan Public Hall regularly attracts international touring folk and roots musicians, raising the profile of the township in the Gippsland Region and across Victoria.

While the centre has been under economic stress in recent years, confidence over the past year has been boosted by the impending reopening of the supermarket in mid 2011, the success of several new art and craft boutiques and the promise of a solution to water contamination problems with the imminent completion of the sewerage scheme.

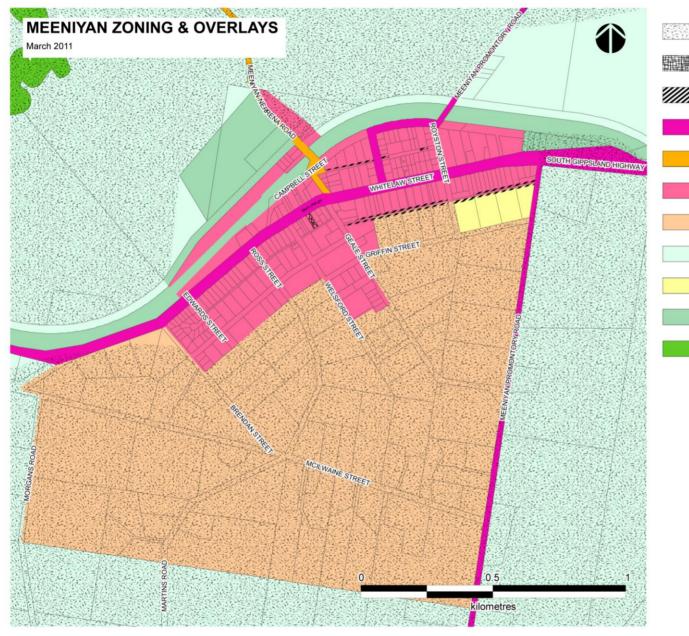






In terms of planning controls, the majority of the township is included in the Township Zone (TZ) under the *South Gippsland Planning Scheme*, with small parcels of Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ). An extensive area of Rural Living Zone (RLZ) extends to the south of Meeniyan. All land outside of the Township Zone is subject to an Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) which identifies land subject to erosion and flooding. There are also significant strands of vegetation surrounding the township (refer to zone and overlay map on page 4).

Leongatha Shire Context MELBOURNE 130km **MEENIYAN CONTEXT MAP** CRANBOURNE 85km March 2011 Koonwarra Regional Context Melbourne South Giogs and Highway Cranbourne Tooradin Meeniyan FOSTER 15km Korumburra Leongatha Meeniyan 2.5 kilometres





(PCRZ)

TOWNSHIP GROWTH

A key outcome of this Structure Plan is identification of a township boundary for Meeniyan. Defining a boundary to growth will support a coordinated and consistent approach to decision making for the South Gippsland Shire Council, and provide certainty to residents regarding the future size and role of the township to 2025. The process of defining a settlement boundary has had regard for the Meeniyan community's vision for the township, and strategic growth intentions and constraints.

In order to define the extent of the Meeniyan settlement, the following criteria has been used:

- The desired future vision for the settlement.
- The role and function of the settlement in comparison to other settlements within the region.
- Constraints on development such as topography, native vegetation, rural landuse activity and areas of environmental or landscape significance and sensitivity.
- Areas with susceptibility to flooding, landslip, erosion, salinity, wildfire or geotechnical risk.
- Supply/demand of land within a 15 year planning horizon and opportunities for future growth (if any).

These criteria are based on the Victorian Planning Practice Note *Implementing a Coastal Settlement Boundary' October 2006. Whilst Meeniyan is not a 'coastal settlement, this is an accepted set of planning principles used for the purpose of defining a township boundary. The following section provides a discussion of the five key determinants listed above.

2.1 Vision

The Meeniyan Community Plan, was prepared by the community and Council in 2010. The Plan contains the following Vision for Meeniyan:

Meeniyan is committed to remaining a desirable and liveable town of quality that provides for the needs of all its residents and visitors whilst retaining the small town atmosphere and spirit.

Meeniyan will continue to welcome new cultures and age groups, and to encourage opportunities for all people to fulfil their potential. This includes a commitment to encouraging opportunities for the young people in entertainment, education, employment and exercise. It will continue to support the cultural and artistic ambience of the community.

It will work to support the planned growth of the town, with a stronger commercial centre encouraging a relevant and suitable increase of necessary services and businesses to provide for the community.'

2.2 Township Role & Function

Regional Role

The Gippsland Regional Plan (2009) notes that Gippsland is characterised by a settlement pattern with a very high proportion of small towns. These are to remain as a distinct attribute of the region. The plan aims to promote future development that:

- Develops economic resilience.
- ♦ Addresses growth.
- Protects natural assets.
- Supports community wellbeing.
- ♦ Improves accessibility.

Shire Role:

The South Gippsland Shire Council aims to promote future development that:

- Encourages a high quality and diverse lifestyle.
- Promotes environmentally friendly and sustainable use of land.
- Encourages development that facilitates population and employment growth.
- Promotes a mixed range of residential, retail, commercial, industrial and tourism activities.

• Enhances infrastructures, facilities and services in the Shire.

The South Gippsland Overall Settlement Plan (2006) is an evolving document, and Council is soon to commence preparation of a Housing and Settlement Strategy to supersede this 2006 Plan. The Plan was developed prior to the roll out of the South Gippsland Water reticulated sewerage scheme, and in the absence of reticulated sewerage, the Strategy did not support additional residential development in Meeniyan.

Local Township Role

It is proposed that Meeniyan will continue to be a small rural town that offers quality lifestyles for both the existing local residents and future residents. Meeniyan will continue to act as a regional centre in the Wilsons Promontory hinterland and provide retail, community and trades services to a range of smaller population settlements in the region. Its tourism role will continue to grow with a focus on art, music, culture and food.

Future commercial development should seek to strengthen and consolidate the intersection of Whitelaw Street and Geale Street as the commercial heart of Meenivan.

2.3 Physical, Landscape and Environmental Constraints

Much of the land in and around Meeniyan is either vegetated, swampy and/or sloping, providing significant constraints to future development.

Areas north of the Highway and Scholers Road and the existing Township Zone are included within the Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO6) - Areas Susceptible to Flooding within the *South Gippsland Planning Scheme*. The environmental objectives of the overlay include:

- To identify waterways, major flood paths, drainage depressions and high hazard areas in rural and non-urban areas which have the greatest risk and frequency of being affected by flooding.
- To ensure that any development maintains the free passage and temporary storage of floodwater, minimises flood damage, soil erosion, sedimentation, silting and is compatible with local drainage conditions.

- To reflect any declarations under Division 4 of Part 10 of the Water Act, 1989, if such have been made.
- To protect water quality and waterways as natural resources in accordance with the provisions of relevant State Environment Protection Policies, and particularly in accordance with Clauses 34 and 35 of the State Environment Protection Policy (Waters of Victoria).

In addition to the issues addressed by the overlay control, these areas present an attractive vegetated landscape along the Highway entry to Meeniyan, contributing to the character of the township. Expansion of the township is therefore not supported in a northward direction.

Land west and south of the existing Township Zone is also problematic for further development due to its inclusion within the Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO5) [Schedule 5] of the *South Gippsland Planning Scheme*. The environmental objectives of the overlay include:

- To protect areas prone to erosion by minimising land disturbance and vegetation loss.
- To prevent increased surface runoff or concentration of surface water runoff leading to erosion or siltation of watercourses.

The areas susceptible to erosion require sensitive development and are generally considered problematic for residential intensification. While noting this, it is also to be acknowledged that the ESO has been applied to areas around Meeniyan that may be unlikely to be susceptible to erosion upon detailed investigation.

As this Structure Plan has not been informed by detailed environmental or geotechnical investigations regarding the suitability of land for development, prior to rezoning of this land consideration should be given to whether the ESO5 is still of relevance in these areas.

Subject to this work taking place, there are three areas that may have potential for expansion of the township. These areas directly adjoin the existing Township Zone, and are located between Brendan Street and Geale Street, and east of Geale Street to Meeniyan Promontory Road (refer to Framework Plan on page 12). Should the overlay control be justified in its application, intensification of development should only be supported where it can be clearly demonstrated that development can occur without requiring excessive earthworks (cut and fill exceeding 1.5 metres vertical depth).

The historic small town centre and surrounding urban development is an attractive asset that should be preserved.

2.4 Projected Population Growth

In 2006, the total resident population of Meeniyan was 425 people. The resident population increased by 35 people between 2001 and 2006, at an average annual growth rate of 1.8%. By 2030, the Meeniyan Township is projected to have 560 residents.

Also of note, the most significant age group in Meeniyan was people aged between 25 and 54 years in 2006, highlighting a strong presence of families. Meeniyan had 188 dwellings, of which 91% were occupied in 2006 with the average household size was 2.5 people. Meeniyan had 188 private dwellings in 2006, of which 91% were occupied.

2.5 Land Supply & Demand

RESIDENTIAL

Supply

Development Forecasts for Meeniyan (2010), found that there are currently five vacant urban lots and 11 vacant rural living lots in Meeniyan. Following the installation of reticulated sewerage, the potential will exist to create smaller allotments of between 500sqm and 1000sqm within the existing township boundaries. If these areas are zoned Residential 1 Zone (R1Z) as part of translation of the Township Zone, there could be potential for approximately 25 additional urban lots. Combined with vacant lots, this represents a total of 41 additional lots in and around Meeniyan.

Two areas that directly adjoin the existing Township Zone between Brendan Street and Geale Street have been identified as having potential for residential development subject to further geotechnical, drainage and connectivity investigation (refer to framework plan on page 12). As part of the *Development Forecasts* report these sites were investigated, and considered to have the potential to provide approximately 20 lots. Further subdivision of this area would be challenging because of the existing subdivision and development pattern, its topography and waterways. However, the close proximity of this area to the town centre warrants consideration of a residential zoning, provided that any future development is carefully designed. An area further south has been

identified as a long term residential investigation area. The area is flat in parts and may have potential for Residential 1 Zone in the very long term. Lot specific rezoning to achieve this outcome should be strongly discouraged.

In addition, two other areas are considered to have potential for low density residential development, again subject to further geotechnical, drainage and connectivity investigation. The topography and the location of waterways on the site restrict a more urban residential form. However, the land has characteristics that may support development at residential densities greater than the one lot per hectare permissible under the current application of the Rural Living Zone. If higher density is to be supported through application of the Low Density Residential Zone, a development plan for the entire site should be prepared that demonstrates how development may be achieved that minimises detrimental impacts on the waterways and the need to undertake excessive earthworks to construct roads and dwellings.

Demand

Development Forecasts for Meeniyan (2010) identified three population growth scenarios that the town may experience within a planning horizon of 20 years:

- Past growth continued if Meeniyan's population continues to grow at a rate of 1.8% per year as it did between 2001 and 2006, the township will have a total 680 residents in 2030, an increase of 210 residents. An additional 122 dwellings would be required to accommodate such growth based on an average household size of 2.3 persons in 2030.
- State population forecast if Meeniyan's growth is consistent with the projected Statewide growth rate of 0.8% per annum, the township will have 560 residents in 2030, an increase of 90 residents. A further 59 dwellings would be required to accommodate this level of population growth based on an average household size of 2.3 persons in 2030.
- Strong growth in this scenario, the township will reach 840 residents by 2030, an increase of 370 residents at a growth rate of 2.9% each year. An additional 183 dwellings would be needed to accommodate this growth based on an average household size of 2.4 persons in 2030.

Only the second scenario, based on the State-wide population forecast growth, can be accommodated by the rezoning of existing residential development from

the Township Zone to the Residential 1 Zone (R1Z). Other scenarios would require more land to be zoned for urban purposes.

The State's population forecast growth rate seems rather low for Meeniyan given its historical growth. On the other hand, the strong growth scenario is only likely to arise as a result of a combination of a wide range of uncertain factors such as commuters (to surrounding larger townships) and their families, tree-changers, retirees and weekenders, creating additional demand in the township.

Whichever scenario is applied, there is demand for medium density development in Meeniyan to accommodate single households and in recognition of an ageing population.

RETAIL / COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL

Supply

At present, Meeniyan has an extensive range of commercial and retail activities that include a local supermarket (soon to reopen), a newsagent, a hardware store, a chemist, gift/gallery/jewellery shops, antiques/second hand goods shops, cafes and takeaway, and a hairdresser premise.

It is estimated that there is approximately 1,750 sq m of retail space in town, of which 400 sq m is to be taken up by the reopening of the local supermarket. Approximately 26% of the total retail space in the town centre comprises non-commercial uses. There is approximately 540 square metres of vacant floorspace (at February 2010) in the town centre.

The town also has a hotel/motel, a bank, a service station, and two premises offering professional services. These businesses constitute a total of 1,940 sq m of commercial space, or 28% of all activity space.

Meeniyan has several small-scale industrial activities that provide employment opportunities for local residents. These activities include the stockfeed batching plant on Meeniyan - Nerrena Road, a bus depot in a residential block in McKitterick Street and an auto repairs service centre on the South Gippsland Highway. These industrial activities provide employment for approximately 30 people.

Building approval data for the 4 years up to 2009 shows that there has been no recent industrial development in the township and surrounds.

Demand

It is estimated that residents of Meeniyan and surrounds spend approximately \$13.1 million annually. This would support around 2,260 sqm of retail floorspace, at a rate of 1.9sqm per person. The actual area of floorspace currently in Meeniyan (1,750 sqm), reflects a lack of retail activities in the wider district and the important role of Meeniyan as a strong community focal point.

Meeniyan is also projected to have an additional 90 residents by 2030, according to the State's population forecast. Therefore, retail and commercial floorspace will need to expand in order to accommodate the demand created by population growth in the future.

The prospects for future industrial development are likely to rest on population growth and the needs for resident services. Large-scale industrial developments in Meeniyan are unlikely, as they will be directed to larger centres such as Leongatha and Foster.

There is some potential demand for further light industrial services for residents and local businesses, including automotive repair and trade sales. These activities may be located on the main road or the Meeniyan - Nerrena Road, and there are several vacant blocks immediately adjacent to the town centre to the east.

DIRECTIONS FOR STRUCTURE PLAN

3.1 Residential

It is probable that the attractive qualities of Meeniyan will generate greater demand for residential development than expected under the State population projections. The likely scenario is that Meeniyan will continue its recent growth rate of 1.8% per year. This means that by 2030 there will be 210 more residents, requiring 122 more dwellings.

The initial proposed zoning change from the Township Zone to Residential 1 Zone, and additional development associated with access to reticulated sewerage, would see an extra 25 urban lots (approximate) created in Meeniyan. This would not be adequate to accommodate the projected additional growth.

Urban Enterprise's analysis concludes that additional residentially zoned land should be provided to accommodate a minimum of 100 new dwellings over the medium term (next 10 years). This would provide the capacity to address projected and unforseen growth in the township.

Given the existing environmental constraints to further expansion of the township, any additional residential land release would need to be subject to further geotechnical, hydrological and arboricultural analysis to demonstrate that intensification of development on the subject land would adequately address the environmental objectives of the Environmental Significance Overlay.

Two areas are identified on the Land Use Framework Map (refer to <u>page 12)</u> for consideration for potential future residential (Residential 1 Zone) development (including a 'long term residential area') subject to this additional analysis and detailed site assessment. Intensification of established low density residential areas (when divided amongst numerous owners) can be challenging, however the focus for higher density development should remain on the inner areas of the township.

A candidate Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ) Investigation Area has been identified east of Geale Street to Meeniyan Promontory Road. Currently in the Rural Living Zone, this land has characteristics likely to be suitable to application of the LDRZ and could provide a lot size alternative for those people seeking land parcels larger than a township lot but smaller than a Rural Living lot.

Development of the land at Low Density Residential Zone densities should provide for connection to the reticulated sewerage system.

Future residential development in Meeniyan should be designed to cater for a range of housing types, with particular demand for retirement living opportunities and household downsizing. A large vacant site in McKitterick Street offers potential for retirement living and/or medium density housing development. Its proximity to the town centre on Whitelaw Street, corner location and commercial interface could support a sensitively designed development.

The existing outer boundary of the Rural Living Zone should be maintained and firmly established as the outer extent of the Township Boundary south of the Highway.

3.2 Retail / Commercial / Industrial

The commercial centre will continue to be focused along both sides of the South Gippsland Highway generally between Geale and Ross Streets. This should be reflected through application of the Business 1 Zone to these sites. The Business 1 Zone will promote further development of essential retail services such as expansion of the supermarket and other fresh food products, whilst allowing further utilisation and development of existing retail premises.

In addition, the Structure Plan should aim to achieve the following:

- Strengthen the role of Meeniyan as an arts, music and food destination.
- Provision of new higher quality boutique accommodation.
- Support outdoor dining and food produce retailing.
- Continue to strengthen role of Meeniyan for regional retail services.

Providing an area of Industrial 3 Zone (INZ3) on the east side of Hanily Street north of the Rail Trail could accommodate industrial service businesses within the town to strengthen Meeniyan's sub-regional role in the Shire. Appropriate uses would include automotive repairs and trades. The Rail Trail and recreation reserve buffer the site from residential uses further south.

IMPLEMENTATION

Refer to Land Use Framework Map (page 12) and Proposed Zoning Map (page 13) for Meeniyan.

The below Overview, Objectives, Strategies and Actions for implementation are proposed as a basis for inclusion in the Municipal Strategic Statement (Clause 21.04-3) in the South Gippsland Planning Scheme.

Note: The following provisions were considered by the Amendment C72 Independent Planning Panel (Panel Report 15 February 2013) and recommended for approval. These provisions are predominantly the same as the version initially adopted by Council in August 2011.

Overview

Meeniyan is a traditional small Gippsland township situated between Leongatha (17km to the west) and Foster (22 km to the east).

Meeniyan will continue to be a small rural town that offers a quality lifestyle for residents and visitors. Meeniyan will provide retail, community and trades services to its residents and the smaller settlements in the surrounding district. Located at an important junction on the main route to Wilsons Promontory, Meeniyan's tourism role as 'Gateway to the Prom' is boosted by its arts, culture and food attractions.

Future commercial development should strengthen and consolidate Meeniyan's commercial heart in the precinct from the intersection of Whitelaw Street and Geale Street to the intersection of Whitelaw Street and Ross Street. Housing diversity should be encouraged to support a range of household types and retirement living opportunities. Provision of visitor accommodation within the town should be encouraged to support cultural activities and tourism.

Objectives

 To retain Meeniyan as a small rural town that offers quality lifestyle for its residents.

- To foster and strengthen Meeniyan's reputation for music, arts, culture and food.
- To retain Meeniyan as a provider of retail, community and trades services to its residents and a range of smaller population settlements in the region.
- To promote a range of residential options that respects the small town character and landscape values of Meeniyan.

Strategies

- Promote the use and development of land in accordance with the Land Use Framework contained in the Meeniyan Structure Plan 2011.
- Consolidate the commercial centre at the intersection of Whitelaw Street and Geale Street.
- Support the development of service industrial uses on the Meeniyan -Nerrena Road to the north of the township and in appropriately zoned locations on the South Gippsland Highway.
- Encourage the development of tourist accommodation in Meeniyan.
- Promote medium density residential development within proximity to the commercial centre to support retirement living opportunities and household downsizing.
- Require new residential developments to connect to the reticulated sewerage system.
- Ensure that residential land release occurs in a staged, contiguous and integrated manner with subdivision designs that respond to the topographic, landscape and environmental constraints of the land.
- Consider the requirement for new or improved public infrastructure and how infrastructure is to be provided / funded when land is rezoned for residential development.

Actions for Implementation

• Rezone land in accordance with the Meeniyan Framework Plan at the initiation of landowners, when demand can be justified, and the Objectives and Strategies for Meeniyan can be satisfied

